Encounter

Freud's Aesthetics

E.H.Gombrich

Between Two Elections

Robert McKenzie

Some Letters

Edwin Muir

A Handful of Dates

story by Tayeb Salih

Letter from India

James Morris

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Whose Churchill?

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Viet Nam

Edward Lucie-Smith
Concrete Poetry

Herbert Luethy
Indonesia (II)

D. W. Brogan
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Encounter

Edited by FRANK KERMODE *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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Some Letters of Edwin Muir

Rosenau, Austria
June, 1924

DEAR STEPHEN HUDSON,

...I agree with you in what you say about a political standpoint for artists—political as you define it. And things are so bad at present that I think that standpoint must be a very simple one, the simpler the better. I've felt this for some time. The younger literature, as represented by writers like Aldous Huxley, is really fundamentally an anarchic literature, a literature without orientation; and being that always strikes me involuntarily as being in a final sense silly. I don't think anyone can face the simplest of life's problems with an attitude like Huxley's, and if one can't do that then the attitude may be clever, effective as an attitude, fashionable or anything else, but it is foolish. It seems to me that people have come to the stage now—with all this habit of taking life as a joke, but without gusto—when it's necessary, almost as a paradox, to say that life is worth living. It's a mask of practical wisdom in any case, just as the doing of the other thing is the sign of foolishness—making a man a fool in the literal Biblical sense....

Yours sincerely,
EDWIN MUIR

81 High Street, Montrose
September 1, 1924

I HAVE READ *Tarr* [Wyndham Lewis]. It is a disconcerting book, as a work of art I think almost completely a failure, with fundamental faults—I mean foolish ones but with some amazingly fine things in it. Kreisler is very fine, it seems to me, but hardly anything else is. Yet I feel he is too insulated; one does not get the sway and movement of life round him; he is a sort of anatomical study. And the others are, too, but they are not successful, like Kreisler. Lewis seems to hold up each of his characters in turn to study them, and there is no vitality of movement in the book, but only a concentrated intensity of isolated gesture. This makes the book unnatural to me, though there are flashes of greatness in it....

October 6, 1924

So *Myrtle* is finished at last. I am glad and I send you my congratulations. I hope it may appear very soon. I agree with you about every work of art being too long, even those of Stendhal, which I adore. Lawrence's are certainly all too long, except perhaps some of his short stories.... *Ulysses* is certainly far too long, I think, even admitting that its bulk in itself has a sort of aesthetic value. Joyce, it seems to me—my opinion of him is always changing—is *au fond* a very meretricious artist, a getter of effects, and quite incapable of attaining the simplicity which is the condition of the most real and great art. (I don't mean simplicity of mind, but of spirit, singleness, rareness.) I think I have made quite a valuable discovery regarding him—that he is primarily an artist in words,

IN *1924, when he was thirty-six and at the beginning of his literary career as a critic and poet, Edwin Muir wrote an enthusiastic review of a novel,* Prince Hempseed, *by Stephen Hudson. Unknown to Muir, who had been living abroad for some years, Hudson (whose real name was Sydney Schiff) had already published two books in England and was in his fifties. So when Muir referred to "this promising young writer" Hudson was understandably amused. The two men became friends and often wrote to each other. Fortunately Muir's side of the correspondence has survived, and the following selections are reproduced by permission of Hudson's literary executor, Sir Edward Beddington-Behrens.*

A True Story—*which collects five of Stephen Hudson's novels, including* Prince Hempseed, *into one volume—has recently been re-issued by Dent. "Impersonal Calamity" is reprinted from Muir's* Collected Poems (*by permission of Faber & Faber*).

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that he is more interested in language than in his subject matter, and that his interest in the one gets between us and the other—a very fundamental sin against art, it seems to me. I hope by the time I come to write at length about him I shall have ceased to be astonished by him, for at the other side of that astonishment (which he exerts all his histrionic genius to arouse) I fancy I shall find a great amount of sham work....

I agree, too, with almost everything you say about poetry. The "real," felicitous, epigrammatic kind of poetry bores me or else gives me a kind of trivial pleasure, which is so insignificant that it is really worse than boredom. At least my poetry cannot be said to have excellence of form! It has no felicities, and I dislike felicities from the bottom of my heart—they give me a faint sickish feeling. I don't know whether this feeling is justifiable objectively, but I think it is; "real" poetry is a kind of poetry in which a disagreeable kind of personal superiority is asserted, and as poetry is concerned in my mind with great themes and is the response of the individual mind to those at the few moments when it is raised above itself, that assertion of superiority is false psychologically, repellent and foolish. Humility is better, though I don't like the expression of humility in art, but simplicity can never be wrong....

Summerhill, Lyme Regis, Dorset
January 1, 1925

MY DEAR S.H.,

...Your point about Lawrence's persistent patches of great writing is, I think, very just, but I think with an absolute justice which one cannot uphold unconditionally in literary criticism. I found myself in this difficult position with Lawrence, that I had pointed out his faults, among these formlessness, haste, lack of objectivity; and then, in consulting my total reaction to him, I discovered that what I had said did not do justice to that, and I knew, too, that where I had been most moved by Lawrence's genius was in isolated passages of splendid divination, where a really extraordinary power of vision came through. It would not have been fair to close the essay without some acknowledgment of these. Considered purely from the standpoint of art these passages are actual blemishes, for they are not on the same plane as the rest of the works where they occur; they stick out like isolated peaks, and spoil the pattern and destroy proportion. Yet Lawrence's genius is most essentially seen in them; they are fine, wherever they may occur, and I have no doubt in my mind that he should be given credit for them, if not as an artist, as a man of great natural power. I think of such passages as the wallaby hunt and the fight between Jack Grant and Esau in *The Boy in the Bush*. Do you agree with this?

I was again in continual difficulties with the essay on Lawrence chiefly because, like you, I am profoundly repelled by a great many things in his work. I tried to make allowances for this feeling of repulsion, and to see, putting that aside, what fruitful elements there were in his novels. I should have to write a long essay, perhaps to examine most of the assumptions on which people live as well as those on which they could conceivably live, to do that properly. It would be to write a statement and criticism of the whole modern standpoint—not by any means clear yet to anyone at all, certainly not to me—from which such work as Lawrence's and Joyce's and a great number of other writers, among them Freud's, arises and takes its temper and shape. That would be well worth doing, it might be useful to our generation, but it would be a task involving stupendous labour, mostly of divination and thought about conceivable possibilities of life; and I am not ready for it yet, and perhaps never may be. This series of essays, at any rate, should give me some idea of where the straw is being blown. If that cannot, nothing will, for if we cannot discover from our literature where we are, then it seems to me we shall never discover it. By we I mean of course the modern world *in toto*, not any individual artist, for an artist, I think, should always know where he is....

White Gates, Beacon Hill, Penn, Bucks.
February 1, 1925

MY DEAR S.H.,

Thanks more than I can say for your letter about the *Chorus*.[1] The poem fulfilled all my dearest wishes for it in evoking from you a response of that kind. It has been a long labour for me to get it so far finished as it is now. I have only been able to work at it at certain moments and in certain moods; and I must depend upon these now for completing it, and

[1] *Chorus of the Newly Dead*. Muir became dissatisfied with this poem later and decided to omit it from his *Collected Poems*.

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giving it the inevitability of expression which I desire. What you have seen will then be the largest portion of it, but I have sections in my mind which will alter the whole atmosphere of the poem. I should have said this to you before I gave the poem to you, but it is difficult to put these things in words other than those they will find in the work itself. As you say, I want to give something of the suffering and tragedy of life; and that is almost as far as I have got with the poem. But I also wish to give some sense of triumph in and above the suffering and tragedy; I wish, accepting all these things, to affirm life, to use Nietzsche's expression. To do that it is necessary to realise the suffering first, to open my eyes to everything that seems hopeless, helpless, inexplicable. This, at least up to the figure of the Harlot, is all that I have done thus far. The Poet begins the new movement, away from suffering to its transcendence and the Hero emphasises that moment; but I have another figure, I don't know what to call him, perhaps the Mystic, in which all life will be affirmed. Then there will be a grand final chorus—that is what I must prepare for—which will sum up everything and convey some of the glory even of those who pass through life apparently deprived of what it can give, the beggar, the harlot, and so on. That, at any rate, is the poem as I have conceived it, and what I shall try to make it. The mere portrayal of the sufferings of existence, the mere questioning of fate—that, with nothing further to back it, is, I think, what most people, without knowing it, understand as romantic—I mean romantic in the bad sense. It is an invaluable thing to the artist, I think, as a weapon, it makes him realise life more deeply, gives him one direct *aussicht* into existence. But as his whole equipment it is bad, for people cannot live by it, they must come to a stage where they make a judgment, value, call it whatever you will. So that the romantic in this sense would be a man who expressed an attitude to life—a perfectly genuine one, too—but not a principle of life, not something by which one can live. That is, I think, what Leopardi and Baudelaire did, great men as they were. What do you think of this? I am convinced of it....

February 28, 1925

MY DEAR SYDNEY,

...Your view of life—as you saw it on Wednesday—did trouble me quite a lot....I have no doubt that life is full of suffering, of injustice, of meanness, of weakness, of hypocrisies; but I know that these things are not to me in the least arguments for or against life. I do feel all this misery very keenly; but I feel in it, too, a sort of slendour, in love, hatred, anger, loss, despising and being despised, life, death, desire and everything. Seen deeply enough the life of the most ordinary human creature, who has to feel or bear all these final things, seems to me portentous, past all theorising, all relevance to optimism or pessimism. So that for myself the affirmation of life is not conditioned by my having to think life a happy business, and it has very little to do with love, except that love which is an attempt to comprehend, to imagine, everything, terrible as well as pleasant. I believe you are perfectly right as an artist in trying to see life, suffering, degradation, as it is. I do not know whether you know Keats' wonderful lines in the second *Hyperion*, but to me it is the innermost revelation of the artist's.

> *None can attain this height* [that is, the artist's height]
> *Save those to whom the misery of the world*
> *Is misery, and will not let them rest.*

And Goethe said the same thing in *"Wer nie sein Brot mit Thränen ass,"* and Shelley again and again.... Morally, in such things as cruelty, meanness, duplicity, lack of courage, intellectual honesty, freedom of mind, sensitiveness, I do not believe we are any worse than we have ever been before, and it may be that we are a good deal better. Perhaps our chief misery is that we are in a period of transition, that nothing quite full-grown can come to us, that we are striving for what we do not rightly know—in other words, experimenting. The joy of the artist who, like Shakespeare and his contemporaries, has all the means of art fresh-minted to his hand, new and yet perfect, we cannot know. But periods of that kind can come very seldom. One may come in the generation to follow ours if the experiments of this age are successfully prosecuted and should open out a new opportunity. Or one may come like "a thief in the night" as such things do often come....I know the expense of spirit in this waste of shame which our generation is; the mysterious spiritual destruction of such really fine and gifted natures as Eliot, the spiritual twisting of Joyce, the distortion of everything, the chaos between the fall of one set of values and the discovery of another. All this is not to

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be denied. But I should like to quote Keats again, out of one of his letters. "As to the poetical character [he might have said the artistic] it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—it has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen." And even old Wordsworth, defending Burns' obscenity in "The Jolly Beggars," said something of the same kind....

March 27, 1925

THANKS VERY MUCH indeed for Richards' book [*Principles of Literary Criticism*]. I heartily dislike his way of saying things... but it is evident that he has said a number of valuable things, and when I have digested these, I shall return the book. He has helped me a great deal in confirming me in my conviction that for poetry metre is almost essential, and rhyme a much more profound principle than people imagine. I think his chapter on this is admirable. Also his chapter on the imagination and on tragedy —although that owes almost everything to a passage of Coleridge which I have always thought the best piece of criticism in the English language. The book is valuable at present, but I feel that in ten years it will definitely date, simply because Richards takes so complacently the ideas and concepts of the present day as his basis....

May 8, 1925

MY DEAR SYDNEY,

What can I say about your letter except that fundamentally, completely, when you talk about your attitude to life, I agree with you? Of course all great art is a wrestling with life, a facing, realisation, of everything in the artist and in the world outside him that he can see and that torments him and is a problem to him. From that surely comes the joy that Shakespeare had who never turned aside from anything, and not because he did not suffer—he must have suffered monstrously—but because he had a passion greater than his suffering. We feel this too about Proust, to take an example much nearer to us. I agree, too, that the people who only take art seriously, and not life, and especially themselves, can never produce significant work. And I feel absolutely sure of this, that only those who face the great issues of life, who enter into and therefore suffer with humanity, the struggles of their time, the whole thing, great and small, and put their witness, as if it were their signature, to it, can attain that joy which the great artists have felt; which I believe Baudelaire and Dostoevsky must have felt as much as Mozart. In [Lytton] Strachey, because there is no *Sturm und Drang*, because he dislikes *Sturm und Drang* too much even to overcome it, as the artist must, there is no joy. And on this plane of judgment I may as well agree with you that Virginia Woolf is not a figure of sufficient importance to warrant a difference of opinion between us. She does not face the problem, and it may be that when I write my final essay in this series [*Transition*] I may have to put her down along with Strachey and [David] Garnett among the forces which are imposing a premature and hardening limitation on contemporary literature —fencing it off into a small perfection which is a denial of further progress. I shall have to come to some conclusion about this as I go on. I do still think she has more breadth and humanity, more comprehension and seriousness, and less fastidiousness in the bad sense than you will admit. But I do not believe that this is a fact of very much importance in view of the finally important values you have written about. Yet what would you say of Jane Austen or of Madame de Sévigné in view of these values— which, I think, are masculine values? And Virginia Woolf is a woman: that, it seems to me, is of supreme importance.[2]

About Lewis, I have never come to satisfactory conclusions; except unconsciously, where I know I dislike him. But when I decided that I did not want to write about him in this series of essays it was because I thought he had published nothing sufficiently finished to give me a clear view. I find him interesting—there are very few evil, positively evil, figures in our literature at present, and positive evil has an inspiring quality. But Lewis' evil strikes me as being the effect largely of limitation; he does not seem to me to realise it; he strikes me in the very midst of it as being self-righteous, as imagining that he is right and all the world wrong. And on the other hand there is no joy, no innocence, in his evil, as strangely enough,

[2] Some months later, when he had finished his essay on Virginia Woolf, Muir wrote: "I am afraid you will not agree with me about Virginia Woolf; it is our greatest bone of contention; but after reading everything she has written I have really a great admiration and respect for her; and I could put all my heart into the essay, for which I was grateful; it makes me write both more easily and, I think, better."

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there seems to have been sometimes in literature. There is rather a sort of satisfaction at proving the whole world to be as unhappy as himself; the world is his enemy, and his satisfaction is to reduce it to humility. When is evil really great? When it is sublimely conscious of itself, as it was in Baudelaire and Dostoevsky; or when it is happily unconscious and innocent, as it was in Cellini and Stendhal. In both these cases we are in the realms of freedom; but Lewis is not free....

As for your last point, what can I say? To myself I make no contradiction when I say that the artist should not be solitary and that his centre should be within himself. It is like saying that we are each separate and yet part of a whole; that we are mankind and yet individuals. You mentioned the other day how galling it sometimes is that we cannot talk to all sorts of people; that we are cut off by modern life from all sorts of experience. I take this to mean finally that we all have a tremendous impulse to be united with humanity in some way; we get it, according to our natures, in becoming drunk, in joining societies, in becoming socialites, in working for "humanity," in a hundred different ways. Union is as essential as separation, and the most profound union that can exist is that between a man and a woman in love....

September 1, 1925

MY DEAR FRIEND,

...I was very glad that you are once more getting on well with your book. All success to it. I'm glad too, that you like the essay on Eliot so well. I really think it is one of the best in the series; one of the most just perhaps because in Eliot's case I found it peculiarly difficult to be just. I sincerely hope that he himself will not feel hurt by it;[8] the effect of all criticism such as this which is perfectly sincere and disinterested should be ultimately to help a writer, make him reconsider himself and be prepared against his deficiencies. I only wish I had someone who could do this for the things I write, but almost all criticism is either the kind of praise which does not help at all, or the detraction which is a mere misunderstanding. It is only among my personal friends that I have found any help or guidance—Willa, yourself, and to a great extent Holms—and this help is immensely valuable, for some of our qualities and some of our limitatons we cannot see for ourselves until they have been pointed out by someone else. This is what criticism should do, and I am more and more convinced that criticism is almost more than anything else, moral courage, frankness without bitterness, character—far more of these than I have. It should tell us the truth about ourselves, the only sure way of helping us....

January 13, 1926

WE ARE BOTH feeling rather well now; and looking forward with quite a Spring feeling to the South of France. It will be lovely to be in Europe again; I am in love with it, as I am not with poor old England and Scotland, and one should stay in the place one has some love for, without going into the ridiculous question of whether it is one's native country or not. I hope we shall like France as much as we liked Germany; if not we shall travel farther....

Villa Soleil, Rue Pietra Scritta, Menton
February 22, 1927

AFTER QUITE an arduous year, I have given myself wholeheartedly over to idleness for the last few weeks—really for the first time, it seems to me, for years. It has been very pleasant for us both; we have gone for walks, danced a little, heard concerts, and so on. I feel I could do that for a year; but I know I will not (even if I could). The writing of *The Marionette*, though the book itself is not the complete success I aimed at, has done me a great deal of good; I can actually feel it, as one might feel the change from one season to another....

April 18, 1927

NOW FOR THE MAIN subject of your last letter, Lewis. I sent for *The Enemy*, and I have had *The Lion and the Fox* from Holms. They have both given me, the first especially, a much greater regard for Lewis than I have had before. The criticism of Joyce is certainly far and away the best thing I have read upon him; it is a brilliant and decisive piece of work. It has set me reading *Ulysses* again, and I find that it has cleared up a great number of things for me; has shown me that a large part of the work is atrociously written, for one thing, and that it is packed with sentimentality, for another. About

[8] Apparently he wasn't. In a later letter Muir writes that Eliot thought the essay "very good, disagreed with it, but said it had been useful to him...."

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Stephen I agree entirely, but I feel that Lewis is altogether wrong about Bloom, who I still think is the greatest character in contemporary fiction. Lewis takes him as a Jew, but I never think of Bloom particularly as a Jew, but as a human being, like Shylock, who is much more human than Jewish. One must always do that finally, I think: we know that the Karamazovs are Russian, but it is because they are human that we understand them and they move us. And if Lewis says that there has never been a Jew like Bloom, the only thing one can reply is that there have been quite a number of human beings like him. This I feel as strongly as I did before I read Lewis' criticism; on this particular point it has not touched me at all. But everything else, I think, is extraordinarily good.

I have taken this up first because it was the thing that struck me most. The Shakespeare book is, I think, brilliant in parts, but as a whole sadly inadequate. To prove this thesis Lewis can do little more than cite among the great tragedies *Othello*, among the secondary ones *Troilus and Cressida*, and among the worst *Timon*. But to *Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth*, the fox argument does not apply at all. Lear was not destroyed by a cunning fox, a man of the world, but by the ruthless she-wolves, his daughters, almost as not apply at all. Lear was not destroyed by a fault in his own character, or by the single passion which ate up all the others, leaving him defenceless. Hamlet was destroyed by himself; Macbeth by the consequences of his own acts. Yet these four plays, with *Othello*, are the pinnacles of Shakespeare's work. So it is no wonder that in spite of many fine things the book should be irritatingly self-contradictory, and extremely inconclusive. I doubt whether anyone will consider it very highly in ten years' time....

The Nook, Blackness Road, Crowborough, Sussex
July 8, 1929

MY DEAR SYDNEY,

...You ask me whether I have come across anything moving recently. By great good fortune I have. I don't know whether you have ever read Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* and Franz Kafka's *Das Schloss*. I came across them both about the same time, and I was more moved than by anything I have come across for a long time. Rilke's poetry I really don't much care for, subtle and supremely skilful as it is, but this strange prose work certainly proves that he was a man of genius. The atmosphere is very curious, half Baudelaire, half Dostoevskyian, the psychology really subtle, and the style superbly brilliant and incisive. I was quite thrilled by the book, and I think you might like it.

Kafka's book is still more strange in its atmosphere; it is a purely metaphysical and mystical dramatic novel; the ordinary moral judgments do not come in at all; everything happens on a mysterious plane which was obviously the supreme reality to the author; and yet in a curious way everything is given solidly and concretely. The book was left unfinished when Kafka died a few years ago. We are translating it for Secker.[4] I don't know whether you would like it or not, but it appeals particularly to the part of me which wrote *The Marionette*. It is quite unique, and I think first-class of its kind....

April 11, 1931

I CAN WELL understand that the translating of Proust must be a fine experience. Translation does take one close to a writer, closer probably than anything else, and when the writer is a great one, like Proust, one is bound to gain an intimate insight into the workings of the human mind at its best which is really valuable, and is worth all the immense difficulty that has to be encountered. We are translating a novel [*The Sleepwalkers*] at present by a new German writer, Hermann Broch, which seems to me really first-rate, and very beautiful, and not unlike Proust in its great truth and psychological subtlety. I have thought since we began it how immensely you will like it, and when it appears, perhaps in June, I will have a copy sent to you at once. It is really exciting, really new, and consummate as a work of art. *The Trial* [Kafka], a wonderful book too, is being postponed for the time being, but only postponed.

We're really very happy again, and really well, and the little boy is rapidly getting well. He is becoming more interesting every day, his mind opening out in all sorts of naïve and surprising ways, like a little tree quite unconsciously putting out its buds. He's very fond of

[4] Mrs. Muir has described how they went about the task of translation. They "tore a book in two, did half each, then I went over Edwin's translation and he went over mine, and the result was a seamless garment."

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singing to himself, and quite spontaneously fond of his parents—thank God....

Castlelea, The Scores, St. Andrews, Fife
May 17, 1938

MY DEAR SYDNEY,

It makes me sad to think that we have so completely lost touch with each other, but it is at least a good reason that brings me to write to you again now. I have heard from Anja Herzog, Hermann Broch's friend, that you have kindly offered to help him, and I should like to thank you personally for your generosity....

I suppose you know most of what has happened to Broch, that he was in prison for a few weeks after the Hitler invasion, and is now out again, but very anxious to leave Austria. He is such an extraordinarily sensitive creature, that it makes my heart sore to think of his position. It is terrible to think that men like Hitler have power over such men as Broch. We both met Broch in Vienna several years ago, and in a few days came to love him.

The world seems to be showing its shape more and more clearly every year, almost every month, and warning us more and more that it will have to be changed. It isn't even the same world in which I met you last; or perhaps it is the same world, only I did not know it then.

I hope you and Violet are both well; our private lives go on, whatever happens, and I can't imagine them not being important to us; they must be important to ordinary people even in Germany, little as they have left to them. We often think of you both, with affection and gratitude. We are still translating, with intervals of our own work; up here, where it is cheaper than London, we hope to get more of our own work done, and less translation. Willa is writing a novel, and I am taking notes for something like a description of myself, done in general outline, not in detail, not as a story, but as an attempt to find out what a human being is in this extraordinary age which de-personalises everything. Whether it will be a success or a failure, I can't say; it may be that I have found at last a form that suits me; it may be that I haven't found a form at all, but merely a collection of fragments. I have begun to note myself, anyway, and I find that in doing that I am noting other people too, and the world around me. That is bound to have some value: the problem is to discover what you are, and then what your relation is to other people: I am starting from that, and it takes me in ever so many directions, inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards: into dreams on the one hand, and social observation on the other; into the past by a single line, and over the present by countless lines. At any rate I am learning in the process, whatever the artistic result may be...[5]

20 Queens Gardens, St. Andrews, Fife
January 16, 1939

THANKS FOR Broch's letter; Broch is a great man and a very good man. I don't know whether I agree or not with your opinion: that the only hope of the world lies in the gospel of Christ. As you know, I have believed for many years in the immortality of the soul; all my poetry springs from that in one form or another; and belief of that kind means belief in God, though my God is not that of the churches: and I can reconcile myself to no church. I have as little use for the materialist doctrines of Communism as you have, and Fascism seems to me definitely evil. I look upon myself as an anti-Marx socialist; a man who believes that people are immortal souls and that they should bring about on this earth a society fit for immortal souls. Immortality, unfortunately, does not make them good, and hardly any of them are conscious of immortality; they act for immediate and generally private and petty ends. Most of them no doubt have to do so for reasons of necessity; that should not be. I am quite clear in my mind that society must change, that Capitalism must be transcended; but if the change comes through the terrible Marxist machine of Materialist Determination, it will be a major calamity, for it denies the soul, and there cannot be a more fundamental denial than that. But everything is dark, and is getting darker: the horrible persecution of the Jews is the most obvious symptom of the madness which tinges all the new movement in Europe, but the movement itself threatens us all, and threatens everything that we not merely hold dear, but everything necessary for a real living life as apart from an ostensible one. There is a real denial of humanity here, as Broch says; there is more, a contempt for humanity, hatred of anyone with a separate, unique life of his own. The capacity to recognise immaterial realities is almost dead, it seems to me; is quite dead in the sphere of action at

[5] The result, of course, was *The Story and the Fable* (1940), later re-issued as *An Autobiography* (1954).

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any rate, the sphere in which Hitler, Mussolini, and Chamberlain move. And in the last resort we live by immaterial realities; that is our real life; the rest is more or less machinery. We are moved about, caught, wedged, clamped in this machinery; and that is what is called history.

I wish you both well and think often of you. I don't know when I shall see you again. I am as sick, I think, as you can be, over the dreadful things that are being done to the Jews, and the darkness that has fallen over them. I am ashamed, as every citizen in this country should be, of the part England has played. And I share, with everyone else, part of the responsibility for it; for we have all been too easy-going and thoughtless and hopeful.

My love to you both,

EDWIN

Impersonal Calamity

Respectable men have witnessed terrible things,
And rich and poor things extraordinary,
These murder-haunted years. Even so, even so,
Respectable men seem still respectable,
The ordinary no less ordinary,
For our inherited features cannot show
More than traditional grief and happiness
That rise from old and worn and simple springs.
How can an eye or brow
Disclose the gutted towns and the millions dead?
They have too slight an artistry.
Between us and the things that change us
A covenant long ago was set
And is prescriptive yet.
A single grief from man or God
Freely will let
Change in and bring a stern relief.
A son or daughter dead
Can bend the back or whiten the head,
Break and remould the heart,
Stiffen the face into a mask of grief.
It is an ancient art.
The impersonal calamities estrange us
From our own selves, send us abroad
In desolate thoughtlessness,
While far behind our hearts know what they know,
Yet cannot feel, nor ever express.

Edwin Muir

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Robert McKenzie

Between Two Elections

A Balance Sheet of British Politics

1. The Election of October 15th, 1964

SEEN IN RETROSPECT this was one of the most interesting and important elections in modern British politics. For approximately two years prior to the election—and indeed until the beginning of the campaign proper, when the opinion polls began to point to the possibility of a very close contest—it had been almost universally expected that Labour would decisively defeat the Conservatives and take office, for the second time in its sixty-year history, with a clear working majority. The fact that Labour obtained a parliamentary majority of only four seats and polled fewer votes than at the previous election, raised important questions about the condition of the British Party system.

Certainly if there were anything to the "pendulum theory" of party politics in Britain a substantial Labour victory was fully to be expected. The Conservatives had been in power for thirteen years, the longest unbroken period of one-party rule in Britain for over a century. While this was a briefer period of office than the twenty years enjoyed by the American Democrats before their overthrow in 1952, or the 23 years of Canadian Liberal rule prior to their 1957 defeat, it must be kept in mind that the British Conservatives had held office—alone or in coalition—for 40 of the previous 50 years. Now, if ever, the "time for a change" argument might have been expected to carry decisive weight with the electorate.

In addition, the three years prior to the 1964 election had seen the Conservatives in greater disarray than at any time since the years immediately before their greatest defeat in this century, in 1906. The party which had campaigned so successfully on the "prosperity" issue in 1959, found itself forced, in July 1961, to introduce a sharply deflationary economic programme, thus providing vivid public evidence of its failure, after ten years in office, to solve the critical economic problems facing the country. The Conservative "Incomes Policy," a bold but inevitably unpopular move adopted at the same time, was to fail almost completely. And the third initiative of the summer of 1961, the decision to apply for full membership of the European Common Market, a move on which —as certain party strategists were prepared privately to admit—they placed their main hope for a fourth successive election victory, was also to end in failure. It did so however only after internal party unity had been considerably damaged by the inevitable strains arising from the attempt to negotiate acceptable terms for admission to the Common Market.

THIS GRIM CATALOGUE of policy failures was to be reduced to near farce by a series of scandals which culminated in "the Profumo affair" of the spring and summer of 1963. In the autumn Harold Macmillan, already under heavy pressure from some of his followers to quit, left office ostensibly for health reasons and the party chose a new Leader in circumstances so publicly embarrassing that the very selection procedure itself was to be jettisoned, by virtually unanimous agreement of the party, some sixteen months later. The new party Leader, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, plucked from the House of Lords, appeared to some leading Conservatives a wholly inappropriate figure to lead the party in its uphill struggle against Harold Wilson's Labour Party; two ministers in the previous Macmillan cabinet, Iain Macleod and Enoch Powell, both refused for this reason to serve in the Home cabinet.

LABOUR MEANWHILE seemed in a position to offer the most formidable electoral challenge to the Conservatives since 1945. After the bitter quarrels of 1959–61 over the party's constitu-

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tional commitment to wholesale common ownership and over its defence policy, Labour was effectively reunited under Hugh Gaitskell's leadership by the autumn of 1962. Following his death in January 1963, the party selected as his successor Harold Wilson, who was widely regarded as the most astute politician and effective parliamentarian ever to lead the party.[1]

In the major opinion polls, Labour led the Tories during 1963–64 by figures which seldom sank below 8% and on several occasions exceeded 15%. This was the biggest sustained lead one major party had had over another since opinion polling began in Britain more than a quarter of a century earlier. The Government's by-election record in the two years prior to the general election also seemed to point to disaster for the Conservatives.[2]

Yet, against this background, the Labour Party failed at the general election to increase its total vote compared with 1959 and it increased its *share* of the vote by only a tiny fraction (*see Tables I and II*). As a result the election of October 1964 came closer to being a dead-heat between the two major parties than any contest since the rise of the modern party system. Labour secured an over-all majority of only four seats in a legislature of 630 members. (In its four most narrowly held seats Labour candidates had majorities which ranged from 7 to 53.) This was also the smallest majority, again since the rise of the modern party system, with which any single-party government had taken office. With the sole exception of the Conservatives in 1922, no party in this century had formed a majority government with the support of so small a proportion of the electorate.

Labour's share of the total vote, compared with the previous election, was up fractionally (from 43·8% to 44·1%); but with a lower turnout than in 1959, Labour's total vote was down by 11,000 votes to the lowest figure the party has obtained since 1945. Labour won the election of 1964 not because there was a net "swing"[3] of electoral support to Labour but because there was a massive net loss of support by the Tories of 6% of the votes cast, the biggest loss any party had suffered since 1945. There was an almost equivalent net gain in support for the Liberals, whose share of the votes cast increased by 5·3% (from 5·9% to 11·2%), although it should be noted that the number of Liberal

[1] For a fuller examination of these events see my *British Political Parties* (2nd Edition, 1964). It was widely assumed incidentally, that the selection of Mr. Wilson represented a "swing to the Left" (see, for example, the editorial in the *New York Times*, 17th February, 1963); but he in fact was chosen primarily because of his parliamentary and political skills and in spite of, not because of, his rather misleading reputation as a "Leftist."

[2] *Gallup Political Index* and *NOP Bulletin*. A Labour lead of 8 per cent would have been enough to give a parliamentary majority of approximately 70–80 seats. The by-election performance of the Liberals was sufficiently impressive however, to raise the possibility that in a general election they, rather than the Labour Party, might be the main beneficiary of Conservative unpopularity.

[3] According to the curious concepts of "swing" used by some students of British elections, there was a "swing" to Labour of 3·5%. See D. E. Butler and

Table I: Election Results, October 1964

	Total votes	M.P.s elected	No. of Candidates	% Share of Total Vote
Con. . . .	12,001,396	304 (−*61*)	630 (+*5*)	43·4 (−*6*)
Lab. . . .	12,205,814	317 (+*59*)	628 (+*7*)	44·1 (+·*3*)
Lib. . . .	3,092,878	9 (+*3*)	365 (+*149*)	11·2 (+*5·3*)
Others . . .	348,934	— (−*1*)	74	1·3 (+·*4*)
Total . . .	27,649,022	630	1,997 (+*161*)	100·0

Turnout: 77·1% (−1·6%)

Table II: Election Results, 1945–64

	1945		1950		1951		1955		1959		1964	
	Seats	*% vote*	*Seats*	*% vote*	*Seats*	*% vote*	*Seats*	*% vote*	*Seats*	*% vote*	*Seats*	*% vote*
Con. .	213	39·8	298	43·5	321	48·0	344	49·7	365	49·4	304	43·4
Lab. .	393	47·8	315	46·1	295	48·8	277	46·4	258	43·8	317	44·1
Lib. .	12	9·0	9	9·1	6	2·5	6	2·7	6	5·9	9	11·2
Others	22	2·8	3	1·3	3	0·7	3	1·2	1	0·9	—	1·3

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candidates increased from 216 in 1959 to 365 in 1964.[4] There has been a considerable dispute as to whether in 1964 the Liberals drew more support from Labour or the Conservatives.[5] But viewed nationally, it would clearly seem difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Liberals, as the only party to make any considerable net gain in the share of the popular vote, were the principal legatees of disillusioned Conservative support which, in a preponderantly two-party system, might otherwise have been expected to swing to Labour.

WHY, WITH SO MUCH in its favour, did Labour not do better? In part the result no doubt reflected the swing back to the Government of the day which (regardless of the party in power) has occurred to some extent at every general election in the past twenty years. In addition the Conservatives may have benefited from spending approximately three times as much money as Labour on pre-election advertising. They may also have gained from the massive "free enterprise" and "anti-nationalisation" campaigns in the course of which various business organisations spent approximately six times as much money on advertising as did Labour in its pre-election publicity campaign.[6] But on the limited evidence available this seems unlikely to have been a major factor in determining the result.

Then too, Harold Wilson's conduct of the Labour campaign appears to have been less successful than had generally been expected; even though he faced as ineffective a campaigner as Sir Alec Douglas-Home, he clearly did not manage to capitalise on, or to consolidate, Labour's lead on the opinion polls over the previous two years.[7] On the other hand there is evidence that during the campaign Mr. Wilson made a decidedly stronger impression on the electorate in his television appearances than did Sir Alec Douglas-Home. This may have helped to account for the slight net swing to Labour which (according to the NOP) occurred between August 1964—when in two successive surveys NOP found the parties almost dead level—and the final election result itself.

THE MORE IMPORTANT question remains: what had happened by the late summer of 1964 to Labour's massive lead over the Conservatives reported by the two main opinion polls for the two previous years? The opinion

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Anthony King, *The British General Election of 1954* (Macmillan, 1965). For a discussion of the unsatisfactory nature of the present concept of "swing," see Appendix II (by Michael Steed) in the same volume, and also H. B. Berrington, "The General Election of 1964," *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* (Volume 128, Part I, 1965).

[4] It could be argued that the number of Liberal candidates contesting the elections and their success in attracting support has been a factor of major importance in accounting for the outcome of a great many of the elections of the past 40 years. Certainly there has been a remarkable stability in the Labour Party's electoral support, which would seem to suggest that the party has had very great difficulty in capitalising effectively on the bouts of unpopularity periodically endured by the usually dominant Conservative Party.

From 1922, when Labour emerged as the second party in Parliament, through the six subsequent inter-war elections, Labour's share of the vote *in the constituencies it contested* fluctuated by no more than one or two points on either side of 40% of the votes cast, except in 1931, when its percentage fell to 33. (The main evidence of increasing Labour support in the country between the Wars is to be found in the fact that the party was able to fight, and to win this remarkably stable percentage of the vote, over a fairly steadily widening front; thus Labour fought 411 seats in 1922 and 552 in 1935.)

From 1945 on (when the party has fought almost all the seats) its share of the total vote has again been relatively stable; during the first four elections Labour obtained the following share of the vote: in 1945 (47·8%), 1950 (46·1%), 1951 (48·8%), 1955 (46·4%). In the two subsequent elections the party support subsided to a slightly lower plateau: *i.e.* 1959 (43·8%), 1964 (44·1%).

In view of the fact that the British electorate is the most highly urbanised and industrialised of any democracy it is perhaps surprising that, in the 40 years in which it has been second party in the state, Labour has not succeeded in breaking out of this comparatively narrow range of fluctuations in electoral support.

[5] For an analysis of the Liberal performance by an official of the Party, see Harry Cowie, "The Liberal Party in the General Election of 1964" in J. S. Rasmussen's *The Liberal Party* (Constable, 1965). When immediately after the General Election the National Opinion Poll (NOP) asked those who had voted Liberal how they would have voted if no Liberal candidate had been available, the replies were as follows: Labour, 35%; Conservative, 39%; "would not have voted," 16%; don't know, 10%.

[6] The National Opinion Poll reported in November 1964 that there had been an increase of almost 7 per cent. in the proportion of those opposed to the nationalisation of steel over the previous seven months, during which period the steel industry had conducted a vast anti-nationalisation campaign.

[7] Although Mr. Wilson was reputed to have intended to model his campaign on that of John F. Kennedy in 1960, in practice he held the reins of control so tightly that it seemed to some observers that his conduct more closely resembled that of Richard Nixon. For another view of Wilson's performance see Anthony Howard and Richard West, *The Making of the Prime Minister* (Cape, 1965).

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poll data at present available[8] casts some light on the answer to this question. In particular a study by the National Opinion Polls shows convincingly which sections of the electorate turned away from Labour and back to the Conservatives during the twelve-month period before the election. (NOP combined four surveys carried out between October 1963 and February 1964—when the Labour lead was never very far from 8%—and compared the Party preferences of the combined random sample of 10,000 with the preferences of the 12,000 respondents interviewed in the course of the five surveys conducted in the election period.)

This study shows first, that the Conservative recovery took place mainly among working class electors (*see Table III*).

The Conservatives increased their lead slightly among the upper and middle classes (*AB*) and the lower middle class (*C1*). But much the strongest Conservative recovery was among the skilled working class (*C2*) where Labour's lead fell, within less than one year, by 5%, and among the unskilled and "very poor" (*DE*) where it fell by no less than nine points. These last two categories (C2 and DE) remained, of course, preponderantly Labour in their allegiance; but Labour obtained no more than 54·4% of the skilled working class vote and 59·1% of the *DE* category. Since these two categories together compose 70% of the electorate, according to NOP's calculation, it seems clear that, as in previous elections, the Conservatives drew rather more than half their total vote from the working class and the very poor.[9] NOP also found, incidentally, that among Trade Union members, Labour's lead over the Conservatives declined within the year by no less than 9%, a markedly larger decline in Labour support than occurred among non-Trade Union members.

The other major finding of this NOP survey was that Labour lost heavily among the younger age groups (*see Table IV*).

There is no clear evidence which would appear to account for this pronounced swing back to the Conservatives on the part of the working class and the younger voters. From my own study of working class attitudes to the political parties, I would suggest that at least until the almost chaotic difficulties faced by the Conservative Party in the years 1961–4 there was a long-standing tendency for a considerable proportion of working class voters to credit the Conservatives with innately superior governmental skills in certain key areas of policy. The Conservatives may have ceased for a time to enjoy this advantage during the years before the last election. Yet as the fateful day of choice approached it could well be that a considerable proportion of working class voters found themselves reluctant to discharge the Conservatives from office and to invest the relatively untried Labour Party with the responsibilities of government.

It must be kept in mind that the electorate was not aroused to a very great interest. Turnout on election day fell slightly compared with 1959 (from 78·8 to 77·1%). The proportion of voters seeing "little difference" between the Parties had increased (according to the Gallup Poll) from 34% in 1959 to 49% in 1964. When

[8] The National Opinion Polls, as reported in their *Bulletin*, have produced the most elaborate post-election re-analysis of their data of any of the polling organisations. For the first full-scale academic survey of voting behaviour in Britain we must await the findings of David Butler and Donald Stokes who are preparing a volume on the 1964 election (to be published in 1966).

[9] *The Gallup Political Index* (No. 55, December 1964), reporting similar findings, estimated that the Conservatives drew 54% of their vote from those classified as "working class" or "very poor." For discussion of working class conservatism in Britain, see R. T. McKenzie and Allan Silver, "Conservatism, Industrialism and the Working Class Tory in England," *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology* (1962, Vol. III).

In the part of the United States with the most nearly similar social structure to that of the United Kingdom (*i.e.* the urban North East), the Democrats usually poll a larger proportion of the working class vote than the Labour Party does in the United Kingdom.

TABLE III: Support for the Parties by Social Class

	Winter 1963/64					General Election, 1964				
	ALL %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %	ALL %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %
Con.	40·7	76·4	59·4	32·6	26·9	42·9	74·7	60·7	33·9	30·9
Lab.	49·0	11·5	27·0	58·1	64·1	44·8	8·9	24·8	54·4	59·1
Lib.	9·9	12·0	13·0	8·8	8·6	11·4	14·9	13·7	10·9	9·1
Other Parties	0·4	0·1	0·5	0·5	0·4	0·9	1·5	0·8	0·8	0·9
Labour lead over Con.	+8·3	−64·9	−32·4	+25·5	+37·2	+1·9	−65·8	−35·9	+20·5	+28·2
"Swing" to Con.						3·2	0·5	1·8	2·5	4·5

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asked whether they agreed with Labour's charge that the period of Conservative rule since 1951 could be fairly described as "thirteen wasted years" (one of Labour's most frequently repeated slogans), NOP found 75·7% of a sample of the whole electorate replied in the negative, as did 59% of Labour voters. Faced with the statement "Labour leaders said that the Government has arranged an election boom which will soon bring an economic crisis. Do you agree or disagree?" only 25·6% of the electorate said they agreed with this statement. Less than half of Labour voters agreed; and one-third disagreed. Finally, when voters were asked whether they thought the outcome of the election would effect them personally, 71% replied either "not very much" (48·4%) or "not at all" (22·5%). Labour voters' replies, perhaps surprisingly, were almost precisely the same as those of the national sample, *i.e.*, "Not very much," 48%; "Not at all," 20%.

TABLE IV: **Labour Lead over the Conservatives**

Age Group	Winter 1963/64	Election October 1964
21–24	+23·7	+ 9·3
25–34	+20·7	+ 8·4
35–44	+19	+10·6
45–54	+ 6·5	+ 0·3
55–64	+ 2·4	− 1·2
65+	−13·3	−13·4
All	+ 8·3	+ 1·9

Granted so tepid an attitude towards the possibilities of a Labour victory, it would seem reasonable to conjecture that some working class voters, faced with the necessity of choosing between the Parties, may have tended to "play safe" by plumping for the Conservatives with their putative governmental skills, who had presided over so spectacular an improvement of working class physical well-being during the previous thirteen "unwasted" years.

Two further NOP survey results should be noted: when asked "Do you think that any of the Parties are promising plans that the country cannot afford, and if so, which Party or Parties?," a sample of the whole electorate replied: Labour, *44·8%*, Conservative, *25·2%* ("none, 21·6% Liberal, 14·5%, DK, 25·1%). It was particularly striking that 26% of Labour voters thought their own Party was promising more than the country could afford, compared with 34% of Labour voters who thought the Conservative Party was making such promises.

FINALLY, on the importance of the question of "modernising Britain," the declared purpose of both major Parties, there are also important opinion-poll findings. 81% of the electorate agreed that there was either "urgent need" to modernise Britain (29·3%) or "some need" (51·7%). When asked which Party was "best able" to undertake this task, a sample of the whole electorate replied: Conservative, *47%*, Labour, *31·1%* (Liberals, *3·5%*, and DK, *18·4%*).

When asked by NOP which activities in British life most needed modernising a sample of the electorate gave the following order of priorities: (*1*) the transport system, *33·1%*; (2) the trade unions, *23·4%*; (*3*) the nationalised industries, *14·9%*; (*4*) the civil service, *11·7%*; and (5) business management, 9·7%. It will be noted that the first, third and fourth of these items are part of the public sector of the economy, and the second, the trade unions, are for the most part a constituent element of the Labour Party. The "capitalist" sector was clearly held to be least in need of modernisation of the five areas mentioned. This would also suggest that the Labour Party, with its strong identification with the public sector of the economy and the trade unions, was likely to enter an election in which the main issue was the "modernisation of Britain" at a considerable disadvantage.

When subsequently asking which of a list of six factors "do you think do most damage to our economy," NOP found that a sample of the electorate chose, by a very wide margin (70·9%), "strikes and industrial disputes" (65% of Labour voters named the same factor). "Laziness" was the runner up, with 39·5% of voters naming this factor (Labour voters, 38%). Inefficient management came third, named by 23·8% (27% of Labour voters chose this cause, compared with 19% of Conservative voters).

These opinion poll data are far from providing a full explanation of why Labour polled fewer votes in 1964 than in any election since 1945. But they do provide some stimulating suggestions as to what might prove to be fruitful lines of enquiry.

2. Labour in Office, 1964–65

FACED with the election result on October 16th, 1964, Harold Wilson had, in theory at least, three possible alternatives:

1. He might have tried to arrive at an arrangement with the Liberals which, had it assured him of their consistent voting support in parliament, would have given him an effective majority of 22 rather than 4, and a good prospect of a full term of office. The possibilities, again in theory, ranged from an outright

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coalition with the Liberals, through an explicit "understanding" on an agreed programme, to a tacit understanding based on an informal "clear it with Jo" arrangement. There is little reason to doubt that Jo Grimond would have seriously entertained any one of these alternatives. But, according to Grimond himself, no approach of any kind was made to him or to his party. (Grimond subsequently took a public initiative, in late June 1965, strongly implying that the Liberals would be receptive to the idea of a coalition or other arrangement with Labour in return for "a serious agreement on long term policies."[10] Harold Wilson had rejected this alternative after the election, in part no doubt because his party, almost alone among Social Democratic parties in Europe, treats it as an article of socialist faith never (except in wartime) to work in alliance with, or to take offices dependent upon any "non-socialist" party.[11]

2. Mr. Wilson might, alternatively, have modelled his strategy on that of John Diefenbaker, the Canadian Conservative Leader, who broke the long Liberal tenure of power in 1957. Diefenbaker took office without an overall majority, but nine months later he obtained a dissolution and went to the country with, in effect, one over-riding campaign issue: "Will you give me a clear mandate to introduce my programme and to govern the country?" (He was returned with four-fifths of the seats in the House of Commons, by far the largest majority any party had received in the history of the Ottawa Parliament.)

On the basis of Labour's showing on the Opinion Polls it seems likely—despite the results of the Leyton by-election in January (in which Patrick Gordon Walker, the Foreign Secretary, was defeated in a constituency which had been held in the October general election by Labour with a majority of almost 8,000)—that Labour would have won a General Election in March 1965 or, very possibly, in May or June. As late as July 15th, the National Opinion Poll in the *Daily Mail* showed Labour with a 4½% lead over the Conservatives. The Gallup Poll, published in the *Daily Telegraph*, fairly consistently showed a narrow gap between the parties; but even on this evidence Labour would have had a very good chance of winning a spring general election.

Following the third instalment of deflationary cuts in late July both opinion polls reported a sharp drop in Labour support. Gallup gave the Tories a 7½ point lead on August 6th and NOP a few days later found them 4 points ahead. But two months later the polls were reporting a spectacular reversal in the parties' fortunes, Gallup found Labour 7½ points ahead of the Conservatives in early October and NOP, on November 19th, found them no less than 18½ points in the lead. (But a fortnight later NOP reported that Labour's lead was only 8·7 points.) However, on the first anniversary of Labour's accession to power Mr. Wilson had repeatedly underlined his intention to "go on governing."

Mr. Wilson added by way of explanation, "I am perfectly certain the country does not want an early election. They gave us a job to do and they want to see us get on with that job...." One could no doubt legitimately add the comment that, after 13 years in opposition, the Labour leaders were reluctant so soon to put at risk their ministerial offices and, of course, the attendant prospect of implementing their programme. But there was a balance of risks involved: the party's leaders could hardly be unaware that most governments have entered a trough of unpopularity in their second year; and, unlike most previous governments, the Wilson administration's majority would be perilously vulnerable if even one or two by-elections became necessary in any marginal Labour seats.[12]

3. Prime Minister Wilson chose a third alternative: to attempt to govern exactly as if he had a comfortable working majority, without, initially at least, making any concessions whatever to the fact that he had not.[13] The Prime Minister gave this explanation of his strategy to the Labour Party conference in December 1964, two months after the General Election:

> Having been entrusted by the nation with the duties of government we intend to govern ... I think the people of Britain want to see a govern-

[10] The National Opinion Poll reported in November 1964 that 62% of Labour voters and 56% of Liberal voters would like to see a "Labour and Liberal pact"; and that if such a pact were made, 12% of Conservatives, 70% of Labour voters and 63% of Liberals (46·2% of the whole electorate) would support it.

[11] This attitude is, of course, primarily the result of the party's traumatic experience in taking office briefly in 1924 and again in 1929–31 as a minority government dependent upon Liberal support. But it is often overlooked that on these occasions Prime Minister MacDonald made no effort whatever to achieve a working understanding with the Liberals.

[12] Labour faced a particular risk arising from the fact that their M.P.s tend to be so much older than the Conservatives. Thus Labour has 88 M.P.s over 60 years of age compared with 25 Conservatives; and there are 18 Labour M.P.s over 70 compared with 2 Conservatives. It should be added, however, that the older M.P.s tend to represent the safer seats.

[13] There is, of course, no precise numerical definition of a "working majority." It is interesting to note that as the election results pointing to a

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ment acting with firmness and taking the decisions, popular or unpopular, that are called for.

It is open to argument whether this was the best strategy in the circumstances, although it was certainly based on a defensible line. What was more surprising was Wilson's initial decision to adopt a further strategy (usually attributed to former Prime Minister Attlee) based on the view that "it is always best to get your difficult legislation through in the first year" (it was never clear that Attlee held this to be wise if the Government's majority was no more than 3 or 4).

Presumably for this reason—and no doubt to please his Party's Left wing, which was to have much else to be disillusioned about—Wilson included in the first Queen's Speech a proposal to nationalise the steel industry. This was the issue on which, above all others, the Liberals would be forced to join the Conservatives in fighting the proposed legislation line by line; it was, almost certainly, the item in Labour's programme for which they had least support in the country; and it was the one issue on which it was not even certain that Wilson could carry his own parliamentary party.[14]

In the event, the Government managed to create for itself the maximum of discomfiture, first by presenting to Parliament a White Paper declaring its intention to nationalise steel, in May 1965, and then finding itself threatened by a revolt on the part of the two "steel rebels." On the ostensible grounds that the Parliamentary timetable was overcrowded, the Government retreated from its declared intention to introduce a Steel Bill in its first session and the Prime Minister declared—as he very probably could have done without provoking undue trouble for himself, on taking office—that it would now form part of the Government's programme for its second year.

THERE WERE inspired reports in September from Downing Street that the Government had changed its mind yet again and that no steel bill would be presented at the second session of Parliament. Mr. Wilson made no reference whatever to steel in his major 80-minute address to the Party Conference in late September. When pressed on the subject in interviews he confined himself to remarking that the Committee to decide the contents of the Queen's speech had not yet met. One of his Cabinet colleagues in conversation at the Conference had the highest praise for the Prime Minister's skill in "ditching this steel issue which none of us wants to get bogged down in anyway...." When the Queen's Speech was read in early November it contained no reference at all to the steel industry. After his earlier false start it looked as if Mr. Wilson had accepted the logical implications of trying to rule with a minute majority; by postponing the steel issue he eliminated the biggest point of friction with the Liberals.

At their September Conference, Mr. Grimond kept open the door for some form of Lib.-Lab. co-operation. "The throwing of life-belts at the last moment to a sinking government" as Mr. Grimond put it, was not a job he would welcome. But he also stated "I believe we could find common aims behind which a majority could unite." The Government, in early October, made an overt bid for Liberal support: the chief Whip in a public speech conceded that the present electoral system was "unfair" and added that the alternative vote—which would almost certainly give the Liberals considerably increased representation in parliament—ought to be sympathetically examined. How, therefore, could the Liberals unseat the first Government in over 30 years to show such concern for the reform of the electoral system?

Mr. Wilson's equivocation on steel, his flirtation with the Liberals, and other issues stirred deep alarm among his former colleagues of the party's Old Left. Was this merely a tactical move or was Mr. Wilson a "Lib.-Lab." at

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narrow Labour win were reported on the BBC on October 16th, several very experienced politicians who were interviewed on this subject all defined a "working majority" as one of 20–30 seats. However, the Conservative Government of 1951–55 had ruled without serious difficulty with a majority of 17. The Labour Government of 1950–51, elected with a majority of 7, on the other hand, was often in very considerable difficulties. Certainly (even allowing for the fact that Wilson led a much fresher team than Attlee in 1950–51) there was no reason to expect that with a majority of four, subsequently reduced to three, he would have a much easier passage.

[14] A month after the election the *NOP Bulletin* (November 1964) reported that less than one quarter of the electorate favoured the nationalisation of steel, and that only 44% of Labour voters supported it.

The two Right-wing Labour M.P.s Woodrow Wyatt and Desmond Donnelly were publicly committed to oppose the wholesale nationalisation of the industry (and one at least of these two had notified Wilson well before the publication of the Steel White Paper of his intention to vote against any such proposals), a third Labour M.P., George Strauss, who as Minister of Supply in the last Labour Government had been responsible for conducting the previous steel nationalisation bill through Parliament, was now convinced, and did not hesitate to say so, that it was both unnecessary for the fulfilment of Labour's economic policies to re-nationalise steel and highly unwise politically to do so in the existing circumstances.

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heart? At the annual *Tribune* meeting at Blackpool, Sydney Silverman confessed that for him this was the "blackest moment" in his thirty years as a Labour M.P.

THE PROBLEM OF STEEL apart, the Government managed to secure the passage through both Houses of Parliament of an impressive body of legislation, including one of the longest and most controversial Finance Bills of modern times. In connection with the latter the Government suffered its only two defeats of any consequence. But since this was the result of the Conservative "ambush," rather than any defection of support from the Government, there was of course no question of the Government's resignation.

FOR THE STUDY of party organisation, the most striking feature of Labour's first year in office was the almost completely unchallenged authority exercised by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet in the determination of policy, despite the fact that over a wide range of issues the Government's policies undoubtedly proved disappointing to many members of the Party, both in Parliament and in the extra-parliamentary organisation.

While these policies cannot be examined in detail, it must be noted that in the economic and financial fields (the White Paper on the nationalisation of steel apart) the Labour Government's basic policies were in most respects firmly orthodox.[15] Its first major decision (with which by no means all Labour-inclined economists were in agreement) was to defend the existing exchange rate of sterling, whatever the consequences for the Government's domestic economic policies. Thereafter the Government accepted by stages—although perhaps too slowly, as its opponents were to maintain—the consequential economic measures required for this purpose. Every classical Treasury technique for defending sterling was used: the bank rate was raised to the "crisis" figure of 7% and held there longer than at any time since the war; a tariff surcharge (which violated a number of Britain's trading agreements) was imposed, rather than the physical import controls (which *were* compatible with the letter of the Government's trading agreements) which a Labour Government was expected to prefer. In three major stages—in November, April, and July—the Chancellor of the Exchequer conducted the most massive deflationary operation attempted in any comparable period since the war. In the final stage, in late July, Labour jettisoned until the government's (hypothetical) third year of office at least, three of its most cherished social policies: an "incomes guarantee" for all, to cover the retired, unemployed, and others unable to work; the proposal for a differential (*i.e.* subsidised) mortgage rate for owner-occupiers; and the pledge to remove the remaining charges to the patient under the National Health Service (the charge for prescriptions had already been removed).

The Times (which had been by no means consistently hostile towards the Government) concluded, in comment on these moves, that most of the Government's "most cherished social schemes" were now "utterly abandoned." And *The Economist* (which had supported the Labour Party at the election) wrote, in an article entitled "Labour Men, Tory Measures": "Labour this time has taken the measures of a National Government without forming one."

> ...the sad thing about this spell of Labour Government is that it has proved nothing. It has not proved that there is no alternative to orthodox Treasury ways of running the economy, because no alternative has been tried."

By September the strong recovery in the strength of the pound took the sting out of many of the criticisms of Mr. Callaghan's orthodoxy. And the simultaneous publication of the Government's National Plan for long term economic expansion shifted the focus of debate. The Plan, according to Mr. Brown, was "a monumental exercise"; it provided a survey of what was happening to the economy, a forecast of the likely trends, and the social and economic priorities to be adopted by the Government. Yet a question remained: how would the Party react to a domestic economic programme which, in the judgment of *The Times* (September 27th) was "entirely free from socialism."

In foreign affairs and defence the orthodoxy of the Government's policies was even more striking. It should have caused little surprise that Mr. Wilson gave first priority to strengthening relations with the United States; but the Government's support for the American bombing of North Viet Nam, and for their military action in South Viet Nam, unquestionably caused deep uneasiness in the Party. This was not completely eradicated by Wilson's sponsorship of the Commonwealth Peace Mission in June, nor his subsequent despatch of Harold Davies, a junior Minister of Pensions, on an unsuccessful mission to Hanoi.

[15] They were more so, it could be argued, than those of the Attlee Government in 1945. As one leading financial journalist remarked to me, after a private briefing from Mr. Callaghan, "This is the most conservative Chancellor since Philip Snowden."

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THE GOVERNMENT'S CHAMPIONSHIP of a strong "East-of-Suez" policy, while likely to win rather more support within the Party—because of its "pro-Commonwealth" sympathies which have developed since the emergence of a multi-racial Commonwealth after 1947—was carried to a point which seemed to involve the acceptance of a continuing large-scale military commitment. "Britain's frontiers," declared the Prime Minister, in what must have been one of the boldest declarations ever made by the leader of a country in economic circumstances as grave as those faced by Britain, "are on the Himalayas." Since it seemed unlikely that the Prime Minister thought Britain could field a land army of sufficient size to defend India against another possible Chinese invasion, this remark seemed to provide the clearest indication that the Labour Government intended to retain a nuclear capacity to fulfil the huge obligations they had accepted East-of-Suez. And this despite Labour's clear pledge at the election that Britain would cease to be "an independent nuclear power."

For the defence of western Europe Mr. Wilson advanced his plans for an Atlantic Nuclear Force which he hoped would supplant the American proposal for the M.L.F. He was able to make little headway in promoting this scheme, and it was clear, a year after Labour took office, that Britain retained a nuclear capacity in both Europe and Asia and had very little immediate prospect of ridding itself of either. When the drastic cuts in public spending were announced in the deflationary moves in late July, it was proposed to cut the defence budget by 5%, not in the current year, but in the subsequent one. (By contrast, for example, Treasury funds made available to Local Authorities for mortgages were to be cut by 30% in the current year.) The Government also declared its intention to cut some four hundred million pounds from anticipated defence spending over the succeeding four years; but it is not surprising that it was on the issue of defence spending that the deepest currents of uneasiness ran through the Parliamentary Party.

THE FIRST FORMAL break in the Party's ranks in the House did not come until late July, when Reginald Paget, M.P. (a very independently-minded Right-winger), abstained in a critical vote in the House of Commons. A few days later the first individual Left-wing revolt occurred when William Warbey, M.P., issued a public statement calling for the resignation of Harold Wilson as Prime Minister on the grounds that he had broken three of his election pledges. (According to Warbey, these were the postponement of the incomes guarantee, the delay over cheap mortgages, and the Prime Minister's support for what Warbey described as "America's War" in Viet Nam.) Warbey claimed that 80 Labour M.P.s and several Ministers shared his view. In a vote of confidence of August 2nd, Warbey was absent from the House of Commons; but no other Labour M.P. appeared deliberately to have abstained.

The first important evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the Government's defence spending came in early August when Frank Allaun, M.P., a well-known Left-winger, moved a resolution calling for a 25 per cent cut in defence spending; a motion tabled in the Commons to the same effect had the backing of nearly 80 M.P.s. Almost without debate Emanuel Shinwell, Chairman of the Parliamentary Party, accepted the motion on behalf of the Liaison Committee, although there was no indication in subsequent statements on defence policy by the Prime Minister that he considered the Government to be bound by this motion.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES it might have been expected that the party leaders would have faced a revolt of serious proportions at the party conference on one or other of the major policy issues over which important sections of the party were deeply uneasy. But in fact the Conference was a triumph for the Prime Minister personally, and for his senior colleagues, all of whose policies were staunchly supported.

The Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, was as unyielding with his critics as Ernest Bevin in his heyday; he had no trouble in rebuffing a demand that the Government should "dissociate" itself from American policy in Viet Nam. The White Paper on Immigration policy published in early August, which had been roundly condemned, not merely by the Left-wing weeklies (who saw it as "racialist" by clear implication and "illiberal" in the powers of deportation it would confer on the Home Secretary) but also by the *Times*, *Guardian*, and *Economist*, was overwhelmingly endorsed by the conference by a vote of 4·7 to 1·5 million.

So also was the Government's general economic policy, although there was spirited criticism of their proposal to take powers to require trade unions to give advance notice of their impending wage claims. Some union leaders saw this as a deadly weapon in the hands of a future Tory Government and Clive Jenkins declared that any party which supported legislation "as repugnant and obnoxious as this" could no longer claim to be socialist. But even this proposal, the boldest break with the established pattern of industrial relations in Britain for

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almost forty years, was endorsed by 3·6 to 2·5 millions.

It would have been difficult to devise a list of policies more likely to rouse the apprehensions of the Party's Left-wing, of its idealists (when the immigration issue was discussed), or the more militant wing of the trade union movement. Yet Mr. Wilson and his colleagues swept the board in a stunning demonstration of the power and authority of an adroit Labour leadership.

Even if the Conference *had* voted against the early warning system for wages it is almost certain that Mr. Brown would have ignored its decision as flatly as Aneurin Bevan as Minister of Health had done on two earlier occasions. Mr. Wilson himself had already made it clear that he did *not* accept the right of Conference to take decisions which would bind the parliamentary party *even in opposition*.[16] And in opening the 1965 Conference Ray Gunter, the Chairman, had declared "... the Labour Party is not the Labour Government" and any form of "dictation," he warned, was utterly unacceptable.

THERE ARE SEVERAL explanations of the Government's comparative immunity from serious difficulties with its followers, despite the striking continuity of many of its major policies with those of the previous government. *First*, there is the strong tradition in the Labour Party, and in the Labour Movement generally, of loyalty to its Leaders, however much certain of their policies may prove disappointing to sections of the Party. This traditional attitude was undoubtedly reinforced during Labour's first year in office by the Government's manifestly precarious majority. While a bold minority, however small in numbers, could take advantage of the situation to bring great pressure on the Government (as the activities of Donnelly and Wyatt with respect to the Steel White Paper showed), the great majority of Labour M.P.s, including those on the Left, seemed *less* rather than more inclined to express open dissent of a sort which would embarrass the Government.

The Left faced two further problems: Mr. Wilson had had their solid support in the elections to choose Gaitskell's successor; and if he were to be overthrown (as William Warbey, for example, proposed) there was no reason whatever to think that his successor would adopt policies more acceptable to the Left. Again, Mr. Wilson had carefully included in his Cabinet the three strongest potential Left-wing rebels, Barbara Castle, Anthony Greenwood, and Frank Cousins. (He had drafted the latter directly into the Cabinet from his position as Secretary of Britain's largest union, the Transport and General Workers' Union. Mr. Cousins, incidentally, had also been told by the late Hugh Gaitskell, *after* their bitter quarrel over unilateralism in 1960–61, that he would be offered a post in a Gaitskell Cabinet).[17]

While the inclusion of these Left-wing leaders in the Government helped no doubt to ensure the stability of Mr. Wilson's Government during its first year, it also exposed the Prime Minister to the danger of the kind of block resignation from the Cabinet in which he himself had taken part during the closing months of the second Attlee Government. This possibility was perhaps increased by the fact that Mr. Wilson, to the surprise of many observers, had appointed the three leading Left-wingers to offices of comparatively minor importance in his Government. All the major positions of power in the Government had gone to the men of the Right or Centre of the Party.

But despite the furtive echoes of discontent from the Left the Government survived its first year whole and intact. Mr. Wilson's own position was enormously strengthened by the agreed findings of the opinion polls from September onward that his Government stood in high favour with the electorate. It enabled him to speak to the Conference with great authority as a manifestly successful Prime Minister. And it greatly reduced the risk that his Left-wing colleagues in the Cabinet would decide to leave a floundering ship "on an important point of principle" as he himself had done (along with

[16] On the day Mr. Wilson became Leader (in February 1963) he made it clear that he stood with the Parliamentary Labour Party decision to ignore the resolution (twice passed by Annual Conferences) calling for the withdrawal of the American *Polaris* base in Scotland.

[17] Frank Cousins, although he was in theory "muzzled" in the Cabinet, was nonetheless the source of some embarrassment to the Prime Minister. Before taking office Cousins had been a well-known opponent of the idea of an Incomes Policy; and significantly, although he was the leading Trade Unionist in the Cabinet, he made no speeches as a Minister in support of the Government's policy in this field. In fact, he went out of his way, with some ostentation, to attend the bi-annual conference of his Union in July, which condemned both the Incomes Policy and the Government's support for the United States policy in Viet Nam. After these resolutions had been passed amidst much publicity Cousins expressed his "delight" that the Union "had registered some firm views on some matters of real concern." With complete consistency he then proceeded at the Party Conference to sit with his Union colleagues as they voted against the platform and, by implication, the Government of which Mr. Cousins was a member, on three major issues put to the Conference. To many this seemed a striking new departure in the practice of collective Cabinet responsibility.

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Aneurin Bevan and John Freeman) in the spring of 1951.

ONE OTHER CONSIDERATION which helped to ensure a smooth passage for the Wilson Government was the surprising decision taken early in the new Parliament that there would be no regular meetings of the full Parliamentary Labour Party; they were to be held only on an *ad hoc* basis to discuss particular issues. This was a sharp break with previous practice when Labour had been in power; the PLP had met fortnightly, for example, during the period of the post-war Attlee Governments. The new arrangements undoubtedly tended to minimise the opportunities for backbenchers to criticise or to influence the Government's policies.[18]

UNDOUBTEDLY Mr. Wilson's public standing and his authority within the Party were enormously enhanced by his handling of the Rhodesian crisis which moved towards its climax with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Smith government on November 11th. Again there was considerable uneasiness among some sections of the Labour Party, in particular about the concessions the Prime Minister had been prepared to make to the Smith government to avoid U.D.I., above all his willingness to grant independence to the territory before majority rule was established. But Mr. Wilson's dramatic flight to Salisbury, his appearance on television as the nation's spokesman, his frequent meetings with the Queen, all combined to elevate the Prime Minister, for the time being at least, to a status which no other Labour Prime Minister had achieved.

His capacities as a politician had never been in doubt; his admirers—and they were now to be found far beyond the ranks of the Labour Party—began to see in him the qualities of the statesman and, indeed, elements of greatness. But, although it found little open expression, there was still a strong current of uneasiness among his followers, particularly on the Party's Left. What were they to make of the orthodoxy of the government's economic policies, the jettisoning of steel, the White Paper on immigration, the retention of nuclear weapons, the "slavishness" (as some saw it) of the government's support for American policy in Viet Nam? Were all these policies the by-product of the government's tiny majority and of its need to establish its dependability and moderation in the eyes both of the electorate at home and of the international bankers abroad? Or, in their cumulative effect, did these policies call into question Mr. Wilson's own devotion to "socialist principle"? Was his administration to yield further credence to the claim that "Socialists may triumph, but Socialism never"?

Few would accept the parallel drawn by William Warbey between Harold Wilson and Ramsay MacDonald. But a comparison between Mr. Wilson's legerdemain in 1964–65 and that of Harold Macmillan in reviving the fortunes of the Tories in 1957–59 seemed to many more apt. And were there perhaps intimations of the consummate political artistry of Lloyd George in Mr. Wilson's capacity to keep a half-dozen balls in the air at one time?

A year in office is far too brief a time in which to take the measure of a new Prime Minister. But whatever assessment will eventually be made of Mr. Wilson himself, his handling of the Party during his first year in office provided a vitally important demonstration of where power resides in the Labour Party. The Prime Minister and Cabinet (operating, as they could fairly claim, under enormous pressures which were only partly under their control) had pursued certain policies which were bound to prove disappointing to some of their followers. Yet the Party leaders faced no organised resistance of any real importance. The Party's machinery seemed, in fact, to be operating very much as it had during the life-time of the Attlee Government. It is doubtful whether a Conservative Government, had it roused so many anxieties among its followers as the Labour Government had done, would have had any easier a passage than the Wilson Government had during the first year in office.[19] The ghost of Robert Michels, author of the theory of "the iron law of oligarchy" in party management, must somewhere be smiling.

(A concluding article will be published next month.)

[18] One Left-wing member of the Cabinet expressed his amazement to me that the Left would tolerate this "undemocratic arrangement." Even the Tory M.P.s, he added, met weekly in their 1922 Committee when their Party was in power.

[19] Against this background it would seem difficult to sustain one of the essential arguments in Professor Samuel Beer's otherwise most impressive book, *Modern British Politics* (Faber, 1965): *i.e.*, while the Tories give "a large initiative to leaders and the largely passive function of control to followers," the Labour Party, on the other hand, insists that "not merely control, but also initiative itself must in some real sense be exercised by the rank and file."

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Tayeb Salih

A Handful of Dates

I MUST HAVE been very young at the time. While I don't remember exactly how old I was, I do remember that when people saw me with my grandfather they would pat me on the head and give my cheek a pinch—things they didn't do to my grandfather. The strange thing was that I never used to go out with my father, rather it was my grandfather who would take me with him wherever he went, except for the mornings when I would go to the mosque to learn the Koran. The mosque, the river and the fields—these were the landmarks in our life. While most of the children of my age grumbled at having to go to the mosque to learn the Koran, I used to love it. The reason was, no doubt, that I was quick at learning by heart and the Sheikh always asked me to stand up and recite the Chapter of the Merciful whenever we had a visitor, and the visitors would pat me on my head and cheek just as people did when they saw me with my grandfather. Yes, I used to love the mosque, and I loved the river too. Directly we finished our Koran reading in the morning I would throw down my wooden slate and dart off, with the quickness of a genie, to my mother, hurriedly swallow down my breakfast, and run off for a plunge in the river. When tired of swimming about I would sit on the bank and gaze at the strip of water that wound away eastwards and hid behind a thick wood of acacia trees. I loved to give rein to my imagination and picture to myself a tribe of giants living behind that wood, a people tall and thin with white beards and sharp noses, like my grandfather's. Before my grandfather ever replied to my many questions he would rub the tip of his nose with his forefinger; as for his beard, it was soft and luxuriant and as white as cotton-wool—never in my life have I seen anything of a purer whiteness or greater beauty. My grandfather must also have been extremely tall, for never did I see anyone in the whole area address him without having to look up at him, nor did I see him enter a house but that he had to so bend his back that I was put in mind of the way the river bent round behind the wood of acacia trees. I loved him and would imagine myself, when I grew to be a man, tall and slender like him, walking along with great strides.

I believe that I was his favourite grandchild: no wonder, for my cousins were a stupid bunch and I—so they say—was an intelligent child. I used to know when my grandfather wanted me to laugh, when to be silent; also I would remember the times for his prayers and would bring him his prayer-rug and fill the ewer for his ablutions without his having to ask me. When he had nothing else to do he enjoyed listening to me reciting to him from the Koran in a lilting voice, and I could tell from his face that he was moved.

ONE DAY I asked him about our neighbour Masood. I said to my grandfather: "I think you don't like our neighbour Masood?" to

TAYEB SALIH *is a young Sudanese writer. His short story, "The Doum-Tree of Wad Hamid," was published in* ENCOUNTER, *November 1962. The translation from the Arabic is by Denys Johnson-Davies.*

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which he answered, having rubbed the tip of his nose: "He's an indolent man and I don't like such people." I said to him: "What's an indolent man?" My grandfather lowered his head for a moment, then looking across at the wide expanse of field, he said: "Do you see it stretching from the edge of the desert up to the Nile bank? A hundred feddans. Do you see all those date-palms? And those trees—*sant*, acacia, and *sayal*? All this fell into Masood's lap, was inherited by him from his father."

Taking advantage of the silence that had descended upon my grandfather, I turned my gaze from him to the vast area defined by his words. "I don't care," I told myself, "who owns those date-palms, those trees or this black, cracked earth, all I know is that it's the arena for my dreams and my playground."

My grandfather then continued: "Yes, my boy, forty years ago all this belonged to Masood—two-thirds of it is now mine."

This was news to me for I had imagined that the land had belonged to my grandfather ever since God's creation.

"I didn't own a single feddan when I first set foot in this village. Masood was then the owner of all these riches. The position has changed now, though, and I think that before Allah calls me to Him I shall have bought the remaining third as well."

I do not know why it was I felt fear at my grandfather's words—and pity for our neighbour Masood. How I wished my grandfather wouldn't do what he'd said! I remembered Masood's singing, his beautiful voice and powerful laugh that resembled the gurgling of water. My grandfather never used to laugh.

I asked my grandfather why Masood had sold his land.

"Women," and from the way my grandfather pronounced the word I felt that "women" was something terrible. "Masood, my boy, was a much-married man. Each time he married he sold me a feddan or two," and I made the quick calculation that Masood must have married some ninety women. Then I remembered his three wives, his shabby appearance, his lame donkey and its dilapidated saddle, his *galabiyya* with the torn sleeves. I had all but rid my mind of the thoughts that jostled in it when I saw the man approaching us, and my grandfather and I exchanged glances.

"We'll be harvesting the dates to-day," said Masood. "Don't you want to be there?"

I felt, though, that he did not actually want my grandfather to attend. My grandfather, however, jumped to his feet and I saw that his eyes sparkled momentarily with an intense brightness. He pulled me by the hand and we went off to the harvesting of Masood's dates.

SOMEONE BROUGHT my grandfather a stool covered with an ox-hide, while I remained standing. There was a vast number of people there, but though I knew them all, I began, for some reason, to watch Masood. Standing aloof from that great gathering of people, it was as though it were no concern of his, despite the fact that the date-palms to be harvested were his own. Sometimes his attention would be caught by the sound of a huge clump of dates crashing down from on high. Once he shouted up at the boy perched on the very summit of the date-palm who had begun hacking at a clump with his long, sharp sickle: "Be careful you don't cut the heart of the palm."

No one paid any attention to what he said and the boy seated at the very summit of the date-palm continued to work away, quickly and energetically, with his sickle at the branch, and the clump of dates began to drop like something descending from the heavens.

I, however, had begun to think about Masood's phrase "the heart of the palm." I pictured the palm-tree as something with feeling possessed of a heart that throbbed. I remembered Masood's remark to me when he had once seen me playing about with the branch of a young palm-tree: "Palm-trees, by boy, like humans, experience joy and suffering," and I had felt an inward embarrassment for which I found no reason.

When I again looked at the expanse of ground stretching before me I saw my young

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companions swarming like ants around the trunks of the palm-trees, gathering up dates and eating most of them. The dates were collected up into high mounds. I saw people coming along and weighing them into measuring bins and pouring them into sacks, of which I counted thirty. The crowd of people broke up except for Hussein the merchant, Mousa the owner of the field next to ours on the east, and two men I'd never seen before.

I heard a low whistling sound and saw that my grandfather had fallen asleep. Then I noticed that Masood had not changed his stance except that he had placed a stalk in his mouth and was munching at it like someone surfeited with food who doesn't know what to do with the mouthful he still has.

SUDDENLY my grandfather woke up, jumped to his feet and walked towards the sacks of dates. He was followed by Hussein the merchant, Mousa the owner of the field next to ours, and the two strangers. I glanced at Masood and saw that he was making his way towards us with extreme slowness, like a man who wants to retreat but whose feet insist on going forward. All of them made a circle round the sacks of dates and began examining them, some taking a date or two to eat. My grandfather gave me a fistful which I began munching. I saw Masood filling the palms of both hands with dates and bringing them up close to his nose, then returning them.

Then I saw them dividing up the sacks between them. Hussein the merchant took ten, each of the strangers took five. Mousa the owner of the field next to ours on the eastern side took five, and my grandfather took five. Understanding nothing, I looked at Masood and saw that his eyes were darting about to left and right like two mice that have lost their way home.

"You're still fifty pounds in debt to me," said my grandfather to Masood. "We'll talk about it later."

HUSSEIN called his assistants and they brought along donkeys, the two strangers produced camels, and the sacks of dates were loaded on to them. One of the donkeys let out a braying which set the camels frothing at the mouth and complaining noisily. I felt myself drawing close to Masood, felt my hand stretch out towards him as though I wanted to touch the hem of his garment. I heard him make a noise in his throat like the rasping of a lamb being slaughtered. For some unknown reason, I experienced a sharp sensation of pain in my chest.

I ran off into the distance. Hearing my grandfather call after me, I hesitated a little, then continued on my way. I felt at that moment that I hated him. Quickening my pace, it was as though I carried within me a secret I wanted to rid myself of. I reached the river bank near the bend it made behind the wood of acacia trees. Then, without knowing why, I put my finger into my throat and spewed up the dates I'd eaten.

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Was Spengler Right?

By T. W. ADORNO

WAS Spengler right after all? The temptation is strong to take an attitude of prim superciliousness: surely Oswald Spengler, who had conceived of cultures (with so-called souls) as organisms, growing and spreading, flowering and withering from within, had never thought of anything so crude, so grossly external as cities and nations in ruins, as genocide and homeless refugee masses; and he certainly never imagined the possibility that mankind would, a few brief decades after the appearance of his famous volumes, actually possess the technical means for literal self-destruction. He had been thinking rather of the dry exhaustion of creative impulses, of the transition from what he called *culture* to what he stigmatised as *civilisation*. It was this historic transformation which constituted for him the real *Untergang*. But it seems to me, we would be making things too easy for ourselves if we thinned Spengler's ideas down to their merely spiritual or aesthetic aspect. The book's celebrated impact on the general European and American public over the last forty years was inseparably linked to its sombrely prophetic title: *"The Decline of the West."*[1] Few would have been moved or engaged if this phrase had not implied a great deal more than the cyclical drying-up of the sources for power and style in art. There was an element of brutality in Spengler's thought and it lent itself easily to billboard simplifications. To overlook this is to retreat to that thin, refined, inadequate intellectuality which Spengler himself found so repellent.

So, to begin with, one must make the simplest comment of all—the West has not yet declined, the *Abendland* has not yet gone under. It is true that the chronicle of the years from Hitler's seizure of power in Germany to the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has surpassed the wildest apocalyptic visions. But the toughness, the resiliency, of the collective social fabric of twentieth-century life which has not merely repaired the immense human losses but even, to a large extent, made good the unprecedented material destruction, has proved astonishing. Think of the current picture of Spengler's Germany, building, booming, prosperous, and this needs hardly be stressed. As a matter of fact the very contrary should, I think, be emphasised. In our contemporary mind the recent horror is all too easily repressed; the genuine proportions of the catastrophe are carelessly diminished, and even dismissed as a kind of regrettable traffic accident along the highway of economic-technical progress. Spengler himself might conceivably have argued that the periods of decline from which he drew his analogies, especially the collapse of the Roman Empire, stretched out over centuries, that the deep tragic decline of our own world has only just begun with the passing but symptomatic phenomenon of Hitlerism, that a world split monstrously into two gigantic military *blocs*, each bristling with atomic weapons, could only promise disaster for the future. The anxiety, the fear and trembling, in which nations and peoples of our day live, and which are so all-pervasive that they are almost everywhere mistaken for basic qualities of mankind, would only seem to strengthen the argument for the Spenglerian position.

But this leads us, once again very simply, to a de-limitation of Spengler's method of analogy. For is not the "technical progress," which has aroused the panic of anxiety, the very same factor which would make any century-long period of decline an improbable thing? If the fate of Rome and Babylon were to overtake our world would it not be with suddenness and violence? *Kaputt* was the title of Curzio Malaparte's fantasy of the Second World War, and it summed up sensi-

[1] An abridged edition (by Helmut Werner) was published in 1961 by Allen & Unwin (32s.) and by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

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tively a feeling which had settled over the West. It is a feeling which today is denied and suppressed but the very idea of the renewal and reconstruction of culture has about it an undertone of futility which is revealing. I myself, in a book of reflections written during the last war (and later published under the title of *Minima Moralia*) was pressed to ask what a civilisation, in which innocent millions were done to death in gas-chambers, could still be waiting for before conceding its own "decline." The foundations of the life of the modern mind have been undermined. This must be part of the painful awareness, the tragic self-consciousness, of every man of thought and feeling, unless he escapes into narrow specialisation, modish aestheticism, or merely keeping very busy. In Paris, where the modern mind once found its freest form and spirit, this can be felt to-day most acutely: the present is dominated only by memories. By the very force of his theoretical concept Spengler eliminated the possibility of rendering events innocuous by treating them as a kind of historical interlude. I can remember a dream I once had during the first months of the Hitler dictatorship: I dreamed that the world had come to an end; I had hidden myself in a cellar, and after the end of the world I crept out again. Was it only I who was dreaming, or our whole collective unconscious? What has been happening to us in our time can only be effectively resisted if one lives with the paradox of somehow having survived the very end.

GIVEN all this, and the implicit rejection of the fashionable attitude towards what is familiar, hence dated, hence old-hat—where among all of Spengler's disputatious critics was there one who was his peer?—perhaps we could go on to consider some of his concrete assertions, especially those for which the most can be said (and for which Spengler can scarcely claim exclusivity). Spengler's doctrine of the transformation of parliamentary democracy into dictatorship has, of course, many sources: there was Robert Michels' book on the sociology of political parties, and behind that the long realistic tradition which includes not only Machiavelli but also Aristotle's *Politics*. In Werner Sombart's almost-forgotten study, published more than fifty years ago, *Why There Is No Socialism in America*, there are some extraordinarily acute remarks on the atavistic symptoms of mass society.

Has, then, the thesis of the metamorphosis of democracy into dictatorship, into "Caesarism," been in fact borne out by the totalitarian states? The analogy, it seems to me, is so superficial that its validity would remain questionable even if the Hitler and Mussolini dictatorships had not been overthrown. In Russia, surely, the dictatorship did not arise out of parliamentary democracy; in fact, the short-lived Constituent Assembly was forcibly dissolved. In Germany, to be sure, *Der Führer* came to power according to "the rules of the democratic game"; the law by which he became dictator was ratified by a parliamentary majority. But, firstly, his margin of support in the last *Reichstag* elections was so narrow that he and his Nazi followers would have been unable to govern without a *putsch* like that which followed the *Reichstag* fire. In any case the functioning of the German parliamentary system had been severely limited ever since 1918 by the actual distribution of power; it never possessed the instruments for effectiveness, and from the very beginning Hitler was able to take advantage of the impotence of the Weimar majorities. Parliamentary democracy did not "produce" Hitler; he exploited its formal possibilities to undermine and eventually to destroy it. I seriously doubt whether any conclusions can be drawn from the downfall of the Weimar Republic that would apply to a genuine democracy strong enough to face up to private arrogations of power with the confidence of wide popular support. In this very case of so-called modern Caesarism Spengler's analogical method begins to slip badly. In a reported conversation with Hitler, Spengler once issued a warning to "beware of his Praetorians." It was a simple, all too easy transference to modern relationships of the ancient Roman dependence on the imperial guards. But to-day the concentration of economic and military power makes it difficult to overthrow a dictatorship from within; a pattern of rival cliques succeeding each other on the throne of power is possible only in peripheral societies like Argentina. Hitler not only rid himself of his Praetorian guard (June 30th, 1934); he managed successfully to paralyse the resistance of powerful dissident Army factions even at a time when the *Reich* was in chaos and total military defeat certain. In other words, nowhere in the Spenglerian schema is there the conception of a highly-organised and thoroughly centralised society as we have come to observe it under totalitarianism. It is something new in history. Never have men been so ruthlessly subjected to political power. In relation to this the Spenglerian prophecies, dark and realistic as they sometimes appear, have something naïve and good-natured about them, something of the raised forefinger of a German school-teacher telling his class, *"Schon die alten Römer..."* (even in the days of ancient Rome...).

WHAT remains indisputably striking for any reader to-day are Spengler's predictions for modern mass society, especially its

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Four Letters

Spengler to Adolf Hitler

18 August 1933

SEHR VEREHRTER HERR REICHSKANZLER!

I am taking the liberty of sending you to-day a copy of my new book ["Jahre der Entscheidung," "Years of Decision"], which I hope will meet with a friendly reception. I would appreciate it if at some time you could give me your opinion on these questions in person.

Mit sehr ergebenem Gruss Ihr

Joseph Goebbels to Spengler

Berlin, 26 October 1933

In view of the decisive importance of the forthcoming general election both for the future of German politics and of the German people, I would be grateful if you could place at my disposal an article which would enlighten the German people as to the far-reaching significance of their impending decision and would endorse the policies of the Volkskanzler. This article could be three to four typewritten pages in length and would then be given by me to the press for further circulation.

As regards the essay's theme and content, I think that your particular interests and field of study will provide the most natural point of departure. I could well imagine that the cultivation of Germany's cultural and intellectual heritage, as the Government has set it in motion, and the struggle for Germany's honour and place in the world, which the Government has taken up with such determination, could form the subject of the article.

Naturally the details of the composition are left to you. A prompt delivery of the requested article would be welcome.

Spengler to Joseph Goebbels

3 November 1933

SEHR VEREHRTER HERR MINISTER,

On my return from Italy I found the letter from your Ministry, a copy of which is enclosed. I take this opportunity to write to you personally. I have never participated in election propaganda, nor will I do so in the future. However, I would very much appreciate it if I could write articles for the German press concerning important developments in foreign policy (such as the secession from the League of Nations, which I consider to be diplomatically quite correct). I I have not been able to do this in the past for want of an agency to submit them to the press.

However, I can only do this on the condition that the unwarranted attacks against me that have appeared recently in various organs of the nationalist press are discontinued. To give an example, while the chief editor of the "Kreuzzeitung" happened to be away, two articles appeared in it describing me, among other things, as a traitor. It is impossible to give public support to Germany if such attacks appear at the same time. Personally, I am utterly indifferent; I have suffered so many insults in the last fifteen years that I have become thoroughly thick-skinned. But as regards my endeavour to serve the German cause, they are an obstacle which will have to be removed. When I had my talk with the Reichskanzler in Bayreuth a few months ago, he told me that he attached great importance to winning people outside the party over to German policy.[1] This is also my conviction; but as I have said, it is thwarted if a certain moderation is not observed in criticism. I ask you, therefore, to try to see to it that this kind of thing does not go on.

I should like to add my request to speak to you personally sometime, and an occasion will undoubtedly arise here in Munich soon. There are a number of things I'd like to tell you, and perhaps make a few suggestions.

I remain most respectfully,

Ihr sehr ergebener,

OSWALD SPENGLER

Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche to Spengler

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weimar, 11 October 1933*

I hear to my great distress that you are turning your back on the Nietzsche Archive and refuse to have anything more to do with it. I greatly deplore this fact and cannot at all comprehend the reason for it. I have been informed that you have taken a strongly antagonistic stand against the Third Reich and its Führer and that your break with the Nietzsche Archive, which holds the Führer in the warmest esteem, is said to be related to this. Now I myself have heard you speak most energetically against our highly esteemed new Ideal. But this is precisely what I do not understand. Does not our deeply respected Führer bring the same ideals and values to the Third Reich as you expressed in "Preussentum und Sozialismus"? What, then, has brought about your strong opposition now?

But perhaps I am mistaken and it is not our alignment with the ideals of National Socialism but other reasons that separate you from us. Do write me an enlightening, comforting word.

I was told that possibly your withdrawal was caused by a book. I searched my memory and asked myself—surely, it couldn't be my latest book? For this consists entirely of harmless anecdotes which, in the past, have given you pleasure.

Well then, dear friend, tell me what it is that divides us. Your leaving us causes me deep pain and I cannot find the true explanation.[2]

With warmest greetings in the old spirit of devotion and respect, Ihr ergebene,

ELISABETH FÖRSTER-NIETZSCHE

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[1] Spengler had met Hitler once. In a letter of 28 July 1933, he briefly noted: "Yesterday had long conversation with Gustav [his code name for Hitler, possibly because of the 'Gustavus Adolphus' association]...."

[2] There is no copy of Spengler's reply available. Most of the letters, especially those that could compromise him politically with the Nazi authorities, were destroyed by him after the purge of 30 June 1934.

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atavistic aspects for which he developed the image of "modern cave-men," and this long before contempt for the masses itself became an article for mass consumption. Here there is an imitation of the Nietzschean note, but a bit shriller. Spengler ignores the general conditions under which the "barbarian reversion of the modern masses" takes place, and operates only with catch-words like rootlessness, urban chaos, Caesarism, neo-primitivism, pseudo-religiosity, etc. History becomes a mystical thing, part mythology, part zodiac. It takes another kind of vision and discipline to see that the defects and irrationalities of mass attitudes are a response to unique social pressures which weigh unceasingly on men and women to-day. Sigmund Freud, in his brilliant (and far too little known) work on *das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (*Civilisation and Its Discontents*) traces the mass traits described by Gustav Le Bon back to the basic deprivations which civilisation (or *"Kultur"*)—that is, organised society ruled by laws of workaday living and constant adjustment—imposes on mankind. For Spengler these traits are fixed for all time as "eternal recurrences."

It is obvious, I think, that here Spengler's philosophy is really dispensing altogether with the concept of history, for he has linked it to an inviolable rhythm of unvarying repetition; the charge is not without justice that he is guilty of a kind of defeatism towards humanity. Not unlike many other great philosophers of history before him, the people, the masses, are reduced to the inevitable waste-product thrown off by the cyclical process of life and politics, and as such an element fated for control and subjugation. Pessimism, which not infrequently serves as a critique and indictment of present evils, serves here only as a kind of deification of the iron forces. That special *élite*, whose approval the author of *The Decline of the West* craved for, could only welcome the new Spenglerian note for the traditional contempt of the masses. That in the general *Götterdämmerung* even this *élite* was threatened with destruction certainly did not escape Spengler's sharp eyes; but it served to glorify domination and authority as a tragic, heroic, fateful thing.

Spengler also predicted the mounting intellectual indifference which characterises our age. An observer of the development of the social sciences over the last decades can only confirm the displacement of social criticism by a kind of mindless realism whose final message is adjustment to the world as it is. Where critical energies dry up because there is no hope for changing the world, intellect itself becomes something vague and shadowy; Spengler did not quite say this in so many words, but he sensed it clearly enough, especially in his analysis of the intelligentsia in a dynamic, mobile society (in his language: the relationship between intellect and money). How final is his verdict on the modern mind? Is *Geist* condemned to a narrowing, limiting historical phase, or is there still a future in which thought, spirit, intellect, no longer powerless, will recover its sense of general range and scope? Where Spengler confronted signs of *Ohnmacht*, powerlessness, there for him were the symbols of fate. And to fate, to *Schicksal*, he could only surrender. He thought of himself as impartial, as free from personal bias or desire, but his very impartiality helped, so to say, the declension of what was already declining.

SPENGLER belongs among the fore-runners of National-Socialism, even if, as with so many others in the Germany of his time, Hitler was never *fein genug*, well-bred enough. This gave his body of thought a certain note of provincialism, a framework of narrower limits which distorted just those "timeless" and "universal" perspectives he was so fond of proclaiming. What he ascribed to "the West" (*das Abendland*) and to what he called "the Faustian soul" has come to take root everywhere and has become, for better or worse, the way of the world. And what has followed has not been the emergence of "a new Soul" (like that "Russian soul" Spengler believed in) but a dramatic, drastic alternative between a reasonable reorganisation of world order or the precipitation of general catastrophe. Nowhere has Spengler been more sharply and conclusively refuted than on his views of Western technology and its uniquely boundless drive towards mastery over nature. For who can doubt to-day that all peoples, even those of the East (or South), are capable of ambitious industrial development and of technological achievements not far behind that of the Spenglerian West. To speak here of a "pseudo-morphosis" would be to indulge only in face-saving sophistry.

Clearly, a decisive change has overtaken what Spengler called the West. The political centre of gravity has shifted from England and the old European continent to America and Russia, who enjoy to-day a certain historic extra-territoriality. There has been a deep and widespread break in continuities, especially in the general sense of history. But it would be wrong to make any one-sided emphasis on differences and special cultural nuances. Tractors rumble along, penicillin shots cure, atom-bombs go on exploding, no matter what *"Seelentum"* mark the souls of the managing experts. When Spengler devotes brilliant pages to the classification of the "souls" of the various great systems of mathematics, this may be an incisive and

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correct account of their actual beginnings and development; but it is quite certain that these various intellectual systems are only *mathematics* if they are correct and coherent within themselves, if they obey the general laws of mathematics and ultimately the reason of logic. Spengler, however, indulged in a mythologisation of "culture-souls" which could lead only to the relativistic extremism in which reason apparently exhausts itself in the social and psychological activities of individual peoples. From this it was only a step to the mad racial anthropologies which flowered in the Third Reich, and which, by making the peculiar assignment of philosophy to Germany alone, destroyed the very essence of philosophy, the idea of truth.

THE question still remains, after these few brief suggestions, whether Spengler, in the last analysis, could be right. He felt that the blind nature-ridden character of society, its immaturity, drives it on to disaster. His notions of fate and destiny always had a note of doom about them. But it was also those economists and political scientists whom Spengler scornfully dismissed who had issued blunt warnings about the coming breakdown of the Western social order. When so precious little of what was absolutely necessary was undertaken at all, Spengler's harshness with his contemporaries might almost have constituted a shock which might have helped to save them.

But Spengler's untruth lies in his identification of the "natural" qualities of previous history, or pre-history, with Nature and the nature of things itself, and this in turn became an Absolute for him which he was prepared to defend against the elements of reason and enlightenment. He was a patron of that dark doom whose coming he had so gloomily forecast. The important question is not how and why various historical epochs blindly displace each other, and which societies survive or decline, but rather whether this instinctive thoughtless mechanical process, this monstrous rhythm with which Spengler's mind had intoxicated itself, can be overcome—whether mankind will learn to determine itself. For reason and its objective virtues make possible a rational and genuinely free organisation of the world. But for it to become a reality it is necessary to abandon that contemplative pose, in secret league with disaster, which Spengler strikes. Mankind's downfall will not be decided by "cosmic souls." If man is ever to come to shape his own destinies more effectively, it is not Spenglerian appeals to the "weakness of the self" which will help. Sympathising as he did with the alleged cosmic laws which rule mankind, he brought philosophy down to the level of astrology and responded to the horror which he had so keenly sensed with a superstition which could only facilitate it. It is this which has to be resisted, the will and urge, as in Wagner's Wotan, to end all things.

The Man in the Heart

Look into my heart,
Stranger, and tell me
What you see there.
Our lives have crossed
Briefly. You have seen
These hands move,
This mouth mumble
Dumbly, and I have not
Been blind to the
Quadratic equation
Of your mind. But
The man in the mouth
And the man in the heart
Are not the same—
And you cannot see
Into my heart.

David John Lines

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ART

Freud's Aesthetics

By E. H. Gombrich

FREUD'S INFLUENCE on the practice and criticism of art in the 20th century is so all-pervasive that we are rarely aware of his reticence and caution in his published utterances about these matters. It is all the more welcome to find that he was less restrained in his private correspondence. In the wonderful selection of letters[1] that was published in 1960, Freud's attitude to the visual arts of the past and the present can be seen in the context of his rich and consistent culture that is so deeply rooted in the traditions of German classical *Bildung*. Indeed, to the end of his life Freud looked at art and at literature through the eyes of Goethe and of Schopenhauer. Those of us who were still in contact with his generation of highly-educated doctors and lawyers will recognise in his letters the approach to art that characterised the most cultivated "Victorians" of Central Europe. It is an irony of fate that Freud's teachings were largely instrumental in undermining and destroying this tradition. Today, after some sixty years of this revolution, we may have sufficient distance to appreciate his own values and to ask afresh how far an acceptance of Freud's psychological theories need commit us to a rejection of his taste and critical outlook. It would be strange indeed if it did.

We are fortunate enough to have a record of Freud's discovery of painting in a long letter he wrote to his fiancée after a visit to the great Dresden galleries in December 1883:

> I think this visit will have brought a lasting gain to me, for up to now I had always thought there was a kind of conventional agreement among people who have a lot of time, to enthuse about paintings by famous masters. Here I sloughed off my barbarism and began to admire. There are wonderful things there; some of them I knew from photographs and reproductions and was able, for instance, to show the two English people the painting by van Dyck in which he most charmingly portrayed the children of the unfortunate Charles I, the later Charles II and James II and that stout young little princess. Then I saw Veroneses with the most beautiful heads and bodies, Madonnas, martyrs, etc., I hardly managed to glance at each of them.
>
> In a little sideroom I discovered what, from the type of arrangement, was bound to be a special treasure. I looked, it was the Madonna by Holbein.[2] (Fig. 1) Do you know the painting? Several ugly women and a graceless young Miss kneel in front of the Madonna on the right, on the left a man with a monkish face holds a boy. The Madonna holds a boy in her arms and looks with such a holy expression down to the praying people. I was annoyed about the common ugly features and learned later that they were the portraits of the family of the Mayor of *X* who had commissioned the painting for himself. It is also said that the sick and misbegotten child which the Madonna holds in her arms is not the Christ child at all but the poor son of the Mayor

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Briefe 1873–1939*, ausgewählt und herausgegeben von Ernst L. Freud (London, 1960).

I hope and trust that my use of the German original edition of Freud's letters and writings will not be taken as a sign of disrespect for the authorised English translation. I am quite aware of the fact that the translations I have here attempted do not match the published version in their combination of readability and accuracy. But every translation is an interpretation, an act of choice, and having found more than once that I had to choose differently from Freud's translators if a given nuance that was relevant to my context was to be preserved, I had to translate the whole text or justify every alteration and amendment in a footnote which would have resulted in a messy text and a misleading impression.

[2] The Dresden version is now considered a copy of the original in Darmstadt.

PROFESSOR *E. H. Gombrich is the Director of the Warburg Institute of the University of London. He is the author of* The Story of Art *and* Art and Illusion *(1960). In 1964 Phaidon published a collection of his essays entitled* Meditations on a Hobby Horse.

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who was expected to derive healing from this painting. The Madonna herself is not exactly beautiful either, her eyes are protruding, her nose long and thin and yet she is the proper Queen of Heaven such as the devout German heart would dream of. I began to understand something of this Madonna.

Since I knew that there was also a Madonna by Raphael there I looked and found it at last in a similar room, shaped like a chapel with many people in front of her in silent contemplation. You know her certainly, it is the Sistine Madonna. (Fig. 2) Surrounded by clouds which consist of nothing but little angels' heads, the Madonna stands there, a child with a deeply intense look sitting on her arm; Saint Sixtus (it might also be Pope Sixtus) looks up to her from one side, Saint Barbara looks down on the other towards the two wonderful little angels far down on the edge of the painting. The beauty of the painting exerts a spell which it is impossible to resist. And yet I had an important criticism to make of the Madonna. Holbein's is neither woman nor girl, her sublimity and holy humility excludes any further questioning. But Raphael's is a girl, one would think her sixteen years, she looks into the world with such innocence and liveliness that the idea obtruded itself against my will that she was a charming and appealing nurse-maid from our own world rather than from heaven. Here in Vienna this opinion was rejected as heresy, they praised a trait of greatness round her eyes that made her into the Madonna but this escaped me in the brief time I had.

But the only painting that really enthralled me completely was Titian's *Tribute Money*, (Fig. 3) though I had known it before without paying special attention to it. This head of Christ, my darling, is the only plausible one that allows us too to imagine such a person. Indeed, I had the feeling that I now *had* to believe that that person was really so important because its representation is so successful. Yet there is nothing divine in it. A noble human face far removed from beauty but full of seriousness, sincerity, profundity, a mellow aloofness and yet deep-seated passion—if all this does not lie in this picture physiognomics does not exist. I would have liked to take the picture with me but there were too many people around, English women who copied, English women who sat and spoke softly, English women who went and looked. So I left with an exalted heart....

The modern reader might feel tempted to see in Freud's reactions to these masterpieces the future explorer of the human soul. But we must not forget that in the tradition of the 19th century what was called the "spiritual content" of a painting came first. The way the artist visualised the sacred personages and the events in which they were involved was always considered the true test of his greatness. It was the critic's task to elucidate these subtleties rather than to enlarge on the balance of the composition or the characteristics of the brushwork. I remember a remark made by an old lady of Freud's generation who was steeped in this Goethean tradition. A large photograph of Titian's *Tribute Money* from Dresden hung in her parlour and she explained to me that she even preferred this reproduction to the original where, as she thought, the colour somewhat distracted the mind from the painting's spiritual content.

Nor should we be surprised at the responsiveness to Christian scenes in a letter by a young Jew who always remained conscious of his Jewish ancestry. For the interest in spiritual content excluded any rejection of the religious element in the artistic heritage of the past among those who wanted to share in this culture. We find the same reaction in Freud when he writes to his bride about his first visit to Notre Dame in Paris (19 November, 1885):

> When I entered, my first impression was a feeling I have never had before: "This is a church." I turned to Ricchetti who, after all, knows the churches of Italy. He stood in silence, quite overcome. I have never seen anything as awesome as its stark gloom, quite without decoration and very narrow, which may have contributed to the impression.

The next letter, five days later, shows not only how lasting this impression was but how much these ancient symbols must have meant in Freud's intellectual universe. Writing about Charcot's lecture and his admiration for that genius he continues:

> After some of his lectures I leave as I left Notre Dame with a new feeling of what perfection means.

The Louvre had found him a little less responsive. On October 19th he reported on his visit to the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities:

> There are a few splendid things there, the ancient gods are represented umpteen times. I also saw the famous Venus de Milo without arms and paid her the usual compliment. I remembered that old Mendelssohn (the father in *The Mendelssohn Family*) writes about her from Paris as of a new exhibit without much enthusiasm. I think the beauty of that statue was not discovered till later and there is a lot of convention about it. For me these things are of more historical than aesthetic value. I was most attracted by the many busts of Emperors some of whom are excellently characterised. Many of the Emperors exist several times and do not resemble each other at all. There is bound to be a lot of mass produced stuff and routine here. I only had time for the merest glance at the Assyrian and Egyptian rooms to

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which I must still return several times. There were Assyrian kings tall as the trees who hold lions like lap dogs in their arms, winged bull-men with tidy coiffures, cuneiform inscriptions as neat as if they were made yesterday, in Egypt painted reliefs in glowing colours, whole royal colossuses, real sphinxes, a world as in a dream.

The mysterious dream-like aura of these images, of course, retained its fascination for the explorer of dreams. As soon as he could afford it at all Freud started collecting ancient and near-Eastern *objets d'art*. Perhaps the memory of his visits to the admired Charcot also played a part here. In describing Charcot's lavishly furnished study Freud did not fail to notice:

> Showcases with antiques of Indian and Chinese origin, the wall covered with tapestries and paintings... the other rooms I fleetingly saw contained the same profusion of pictures, carpets and curiosities—in one word, a museum. (*20 January 1886*)

The passion for antiques and the love of collections were among Freud's few permitted indulgences. Writing from Berlin a few weeks later he tells of his decision to interrupt his work and spend a morning in the museum:

> After all, as my colleague Dr. Türkheim is fond of saying you can't be a doctor twenty-four hours a day....
>
> I glanced at the various ancient potsherds with sincere regrets not to understand more about it all and with nostalgic memories of the Louvre which is much more rich and splendid. Of course the most interesting things here are the excavations from Pergamon, all fragments representing the fight between the gods and the giants, scenes full of dramatic movement. (*10 March 1886*)

READERS of Ernest Jones' *Life* will remember how important it became for Freud, even during the years of his most intense research, to escape for a while to Italy, the traditional haven of the art lover. The summaries and itineraries given by Jones are sometimes tantalisingly short, but they suffice to show that Freud's Italian holidays, the places he visited and the length of his stay were very much in line with the habits of his time and environs. For this reason the lengthy speculations which Jones reports (and elaborates) on the reasons why Freud did not go to Rome before 1901 are, possibly, redundant. Most Viennese art lovers, Jew or Gentile, usually confined their trips to Northern Italy and Tuscany. Rome seemed very far away compared to Venice or even Florence. Journeys on the crowded Italian trains were no pleasure, and if you did not yet know the *Uffizi* well, the Vatican could wait.

It is true that after his first visit to the Vatican Freud wrote "and to think that for years I was afraid to come to Rome"; but all art lovers were constantly told what a formidable task awaited them in Rome, how scholars such as Gregorovius had insisted that you needed at least a year for a proper appreciation of the Eternal City, and that it was utterly barbaric to go to Rome for a few days. If there was a reluctance on the part of Freud to take the plunge, it was hardly connected with his Jewish upbringing but rather with the awe with which German *Bildung* surrounded the city of which Goethe had said that he counted his rebirth from the moment he had arrived there.

What was much less usual in those days was a trip to Greece, and Freud's visit to Athens in 1904 is a measure of his interest in Greek art and civilisation. Freud himself, as he later wrote to Romain Rolland, could hardly believe that he was really standing at the sacred spot, and to appreciate this feeling we should banish from our minds that ant-heap of tourists which the Acropolis has become in recent years. It was an achievement to travel that distance, but then it was worth the effort. Jones records that even twenty years later Freud said that "the amber-coloured columns of the Acropolis were the most beautiful things he had ever seen in his life."

There are few similar remarks in his published letters, but one reference to a museum visit written during his happy stay in Rome in 1907 proves that even during the years of his most intensive analytic work Freud remained faithful to the maxim that "you can't be a doctor twenty-four hours a day." Describing the Villa Borghese he tells his family:

> The Museum possesses what is probably the most beautiful Titian, it is called *Sacred and Profane Love*.... You certainly know the picture. The title makes no sense; what else the painting may signify is not known; suffice it, that it is very beautiful.... (*21 October 1907*)

IT IS WITH A SLIGHT SHOCK that one discovers that Freud himself would not have shared the passion for unriddling the symbolic meaning of this and other Renaissance allegories which certainly prospered in the atmosphere his researches created. Symbols, for him, were for the consulting room. In a Titian he looked for beauty.

It is true, of course, that Freud invited one great artist of the past into his consulting room. His monograph of 1910 on Leonardo da Vinci approaches at least two of Leonardo's paintings, the Mona Lisa and the St. Anne, as if they were the phantasies of a patient. A large bibliography criticising or defending Freud's use of the evi-

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dence has grown up round this venture[3] which has, perhaps, coloured the popular image of Freud's approach to art more than any other of his publications. It comes as a relief to the sceptical historian to read in Freud's letter to the painter Hermann Struck (November 7th, 1914) that he regarded it as "half a novelistic fiction"—"I would not want you to judge the certainty of our results by this sample."

What matters in the present context is only to what extent even this "fiction" is based on Freud's physiognomic reactions to one of Leonardo's masterpieces. Readers of the monograph will remember the flash of recognition that comes over Freud as he contemplates Leonardo's painting of St. Anne. Here was a record of the master's own childhood story, for in the house of his father he not only found his good step-mother but also a grandmother "who —let us assume—fondled him no less than grandmothers usually do." But this grandmother's image, so Freud postulates, was fused in the artist's mind with that of his own mother Catarina. Leonardo, after all, had had two mothers and this explains the germ of the painting.

> The motherly figure farther removed from the boy represents in appearance and spatial relation to the boy his real earlier mother Catarina. The blissful smile of St. Anne was probably used by the artist to deny and cover up the envy which that unfortunate woman must have felt when she had to yield to her more noble rival first her lover and now also her son.

Are not these physiognomic divinations the direct descendants of Freud's reflections on Raphael's Sistine Madonna—more nurse-maid than Queen of Heaven? He always took it for granted that what we must seek in the work of art is the maximum psychological content in the figures themselves. That this belief did not desert him we discover in Freud's second published paper on art, his study of Michelangelo's Moses. Here we are fully back in the tradition of 19th-century art-appreciation. Not only do we read in the introductory words that the author "is more attracted by the content of works of art than by their formal and technical qualities to which artists attach the greater importance." In the final pages Freud also acknowledges that his reading of the statue had been nearly anticipated by W. Watkiss Lloyd in 1863. Two letters (September 25th, 1912, and April 12th, 1933) tell us with what intensity Freud had wooed this great work of sculpture to find out its physiognomic secret. He went to S. Pietro in Vincoli every day throughout three weeks in Rome in 1912. "I studied it, measured it, and drew it till I arrived at that insight which nevertheless I only dared to express anonymously in that paper. Only much later did I legitimise this non-analytic child." Non-analytic in so far as Michelangelo's statue is approached in the same way in which Winckelmann or Lessing approached the *Laocoon Group* or Goethe the *Last Supper* by Leonardo. The beholder wants to know why Moses sits in exactly this posture, what had gone before, to explain it, and what would follow.

Jones suggested that Freud's concentration on the figure of the wrathful patriarch in that year was due to the tensions that he experienced in the Psycho-Analytical Society—*i.e.*, that he identified with Moses who came down from the mountain only to find his people dancing round the golden calf. Something of these feelings may have entered into Freud's thoughts in the hours of communion with a great work of art, but again, it would be a mistake to underrate the force of tradition in his choice of Michelangelo's Moses. If there is any work of art that the cultured Jews of Central Europe adopted, it is this vision of the Hebrew leader. In the same context it is not surprising to read that Freud told Jones that Rembrandt was his favourite painter. Rembrandt's predilection for Old Testament scenes and the interest and sympathy with which the Dutch painter studied his Jewish models have generally secured him a place in the pantheon of assimilated Jews.

If confirmation were needed for this conservative and traditional character of Freud's approach to art it would be found in the utterances on modern movements which are contained in his post-war letters. The uncompromising hostility that is expressed here must indeed have surprised those who saw in Freud the champion of all contemporary trends. In June 1920, Oscar Pfister had sent Freud his pamphlet on *"The Psychological and Biological Background of Expressionist Paintings."* In his introduction Pfister states that the movement of Expressionism had by now outgrown the stage in which it caused horrified spinsters to shriek. True, he continues, there still exist philistines who think that they have done enough if they affix the labels of ghastly, barbaric, bungling, perverse or pathological to this new movement. The author wants to remind the reader that Expressionism is a movement that embraces all the arts and includes masters who cannot be accused of incompetence. Pfister proposes to approach the problem through psycho-analysis. The bulk of his pamphlet concerns the work of an Expressionist artist whom Pfister had in analysis. We are given the associations of the

[3] See my review of a recent translation in *The New York Review of Books*, 11 February, 1965.

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artist to his own drawings (*Fig. 4*) which are treated like dreams. Asked for his associations to the angular cheek he drew, for instance, the artist said:

> The cheek of my father, a beautiful strong bone.... Now I must think of something nonsensical. The angular rhythm of the cheek reminds me of the square chair on which my father used to sit....

The right-hand eye produced the association of the greatest fright of his life when a hare pursued by a dog had crossed the artist's path at night....

What Pfister concludes from these and other transcripts is that the Expressionist artist is an autistic, introvert type, imprisoned in his own repressions. Much as he respects the high seriousness of the movement he still concludes with the hope that a new idealism would create a new kind of art that would combine a profound sense of reality with genuine idealism.

Freud's response shows his usual combination of uncompromising honesty and good breeding:

> I took up your pamphlet about Expressionism with no less eager curiosity than aversion and I read it in one go. In the end I liked it very much, not so much the purely analytic parts which can never get over the difficulties of interpretation for non-analysts, but what you connect with it and make of it. Often I said to myself: "What a good and charitable person free from all injustice Pfister is, how little you can compare yourself to him and how nice it is that you must come to agree with everything at which he arrives in his own way." For I must tell you that in private life I have no patience at all with lunatics. I only see the harm they can do and as far as these "artists" are concerned, I am in fact one of those philistines and stick-in-the-muds whom you pillory in your introduction. But after all, you yourself then say clearly and exhaustively why these people have no claim to the title of artist. (*21 June, 1920*)

Two years later Freud's position had hardened even more. Karl Abraham had sent him a drawing made by an Expressionist artist and this time Freud's response goes to the limit of politeness:

> Dear Friend, I received the drawing which allegedly represents your head. It is ghastly. I know what an excellent person you are, I am all the more deeply shocked that such a slight flaw in your character as is your tolerance or sympathy for modern "art" should have been punished so cruelly. I hear from Lampl that the artist maintained that he saw you in this way. People such as he should be the last to be allowed access to analytic circles for they are the all-too-unwelcome illustrations of Adler's theory that it is precisely people with severe inborn defects of vision who become painters and draughtsmen. Let me forget this portrait in wishing you the very best for 1923. (*26 December, 1922*)

It took almost sixteen years and the powerful advocacy of an admired friend, Stefan Zweig, to persuade Freud to receive such a modern artist. He agreed to see Salvador Dali in the second month after his move to London. The few lines he wrote on July 20th, 1938, after this visit contain the most revealing utterance by Freud on his attitude to art:

> I can really thank you for the introduction which yesterday's visitor brought me. For up to then I was inclined to consider the Surrealists who appeared to have chosen me as their patron saint, pure lunatics or let us say 95 per cent, as with "pure" alcohol. The young Spaniard with his patently sincere and fanatic eyes and his undeniable technical mastery has suggested to me a different appreciation. It would indeed be very interesting to explore the origins of such a paint-

4. Drawing by patient of Oscar Pfister.

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ing analytically. Yet, as a critic, one might still be entitled to say that the concept of art resisted an extension beyond the point where the quantitative proportion between unconscious material and preconscious elaboration is not kept within a certain limit. In any case, however, these are serious psychological problems.

FOR ALL its brevity this letter throws a flood of light on Freud's ideas about art and on his reasons for rejecting both Expressionism and Surrealism as non-art. It confirms the brilliant analysis of Freud's theory of art which we owe to Ernst Kris. It was Kris who, in his *Psycho-Analytic Explorations in Art* (New York 1952, and London 1953), pointed to Freud's book on *The Wit* (or to use Mr. James Strachey's superior translation, *The Joke*) as the germinal model for any account of artistic creation along Freudian lines. It is indeed to this model that Freud alludes in the letter when he speaks of keeping the quantitative proportions between unconscious material and pre-conscious elaboration within certain limits.

For let us remember Freud's formula for the joke: "A preconscious idea is exposed for a moment to the workings of the unconscious." What the joke owes to the unconscious in this formula is not so much its content as its form, the dream-like condensation of meaning characteristic of what Freud calls the primary process. It is a process in which the impressions and experiences of our waking life are mixed and churned in unpredictable permutations and combinations. In the dream no less than in insanity the dynamism of this vortex overwhelms our waking thought, the reality principle of the ego. In the joke the ego merely makes use of this mechanism in order to invest an idea with a peculiar charm. A thought which it would perhaps be rude or indecorous to utter plain is dipped as it were into the magic spring of the primary process, as one can dip a flower or a twig into the calcine waters of Karlsbad where they emerge transformed into something rich and strange. In this new guise the idea is not only acceptable but even welcome.

What Freud had most in mind in constructing this model were puns. Take the famous answer to the question: "Is life worth living?" —"It depends on the liver."[4] It is easy to see what Freud calls the preconscious ideas which rise to the surface in this answer—ideas, that is, which are not unconscious in the sense of being totally repressed and therefore inaccessible to us but available to our conscious mind; in this case the joy in lots of alcohol which the liver should tolerate and the even more forbidden joy in the aggressive thought that there are lives not worth living. Respectability has imposed a taboo on both these ideas and to express them too boldly might cause embarrassment. But in the churning vortex of the primary process the two meanings of "liver" came accidentally into contact and fused. A new structure is created and in this form the ideas cause pleasure and laughter. But this laughter is caused among sane grown-ups only because they can appreciate the delicate balance between preconscious thought and unconscious elaboration. If the idea were smothered in a welter of punning the result would be more like gibberish than like a joke; if the pun were poor the idea would not be good enough to compensate for this lack of structure.

Clearly to Freud there was no artistic value in the primary process as such. It is a mechanism that belongs to every mind, the feeblest as well as the most developed. If he dismissed Expressionists and Surrealists as lunatics it was because he suspected these movements of confusing these mechanisms with art. Dali's "undeniable technical mastery" had convinced him that he had been a little rash in this conviction. He was not persuaded, however, that this mastery had been put to the use of investing a preconscious, that is, a communicable idea, with a structure derived from unconscious mechanisms.

ONE MAY ARGUE about the complete applicability of Freud's model of the joke to other forms of artistic creation, but this model certainly has two supreme virtues which must recommend it to the historian and critic of art. It explains the relevance both of the medium and its mastery: two vital elements which are sometimes neglected in less circumspect application of psycho-analytic ideas to art.

That puns depend on the medium of a particular language scarcely needs demonstration. Without the accidental homophone the pun about the liver could not have seen the light of day. It is true that an ambitious genius has tried to translate this particular answer into French not without some measure of success: *"La vie vaut-elle la peine?—Question de foie."* But inspired as is this translation, it still lacks the *double entendre* that it also depends on whose life it is.

Puns are not made: they are discovered in the language, and what the primary process does in Freud's account is really to facilitate this discovery by its rapid shuttling of associations. Take the famous rhyme by Hilaire Belloc:

[4] I take this example from a lecture by Leonard Forster, in *Translation*, Studies in Communication No. 2 (London, 1958).

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"When I am dead I hope it may be said
His sins were scarlet but his books were read."

There can be few writers who never had this slightly shocking thought that fame is more important to them than a good reputation. But it is the accident of the medium that permits its condensation into a joke. It is the mastery of the writer, moreover, that gives the joke such a concise and memorable form.

Freud's book on wit gives at least one clue to this mastery which we neglect at our peril: the discussion of the role of the child's pleasure in playing with language which, to Freud, is a functional pleasure connected with the acquisition of mastery. Surely it is convincing to think that such accidents of sound and meaning as make up the perfect pun are discovered by those who cultivate the childhood pleasure of experimenting and playing with words and nonsense syllables. It is in this play that the ego gains control and mastery of the primary process and learns to select and reject the formations that emerge from the welter of the unconscious.

Seen in this light there is indeed a kinship between the poet and the punster. Both make their discovery in and through language. If great masters found satisfaction for many centuries in the device of the rhyme it was obviously not only because they were fond of jingling sounds. The search for the rhyme gives a purpose and satisfaction to the search for the thought which, in its turn, can only take shape within the medium of the poet's language. Poets' drafts often bear witness to this interaction. Where Keats in the *Ode to a Nightingale* had first written "grief" he changed the word to "sorrow" to rhyme with "to-morrow." He surely would not have done so had the slight change of nuance not satisfied him, had he not tested it against his own feelings and found it answering his mood. But the possible rhymes in the English language remain a reality to which his poetry had to adjust.

It is the denial of such realities which Freud dismissed as "lunatic." Far from looking in the world of art only for its unconscious content of biological drives and childhood memories he insisted on that degree of adjustment to reality that alone turns a dream into a work of art.

IF THIS INTERPRETATION is correct it may permit us to formulate the vulgar misinterpretation of Freud's ideas in almost diagrammatic form. Expressionism and its derivatives in criticism appear to take the word ex-*pression* almost literally. They believe that an unconscious thought troubles the artist's inside and is therefore expelled outward by means of art to trouble the minds of the public as well. Form, on this reading, is little more than a wrapping for the unconscious contents which the consumer in his turn unwraps and discards. Freud's view clearly allows us to look at the matter from the other angle. It is often the wrapping that determines the content. Only those unconscious ideas that can be adjusted to the reality of formal structures become communicable and their value to others rests at least as much in the formal structure as in the idea. The code generates the message.

One of the most famous messages in the English language is Nelson's signal before the battle of Trafalgar. We know that Nelson approached his Signal Officer and said:

"Mr. Paso, I wish to say to the Fleet, ENGLAND CONFIDES THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY" and he added, "you must be quick...." Paso replied, "If your Lordship will permit me to substitute the word *expects* for CONFIDES, the signal will soon be completed, because the word EXPECTS is in the vocabulary, and CONFIDES must be spelt."[5]

We owe the immortal formulation *England expects*, etc., to the character of the flag-code. We may owe some of the world's great masterpieces to similar accidents discovered in the potentialities of medium and style.

If we choose to call the Expressionist idea of art centrifugal, we might label this influence of the language on the message centripetal. It is this centripetal element that is so often neglected in popular accounts of artistic creation despite the fact that artists have always stressed its supreme importance.

THERE IS PERHAPS no more beautiful introspective account of poetic creation than the moving pages in Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* in which Yuri sits down, during a crisis in his life, to write poetry:

> After two or three stanzas and several images by which he was himself astonished, his work took possession of him and he experienced the approach of what is called inspiration. At such moments the correlation of the forces controlling the artist is, as it were, stood on its head. The ascendancy is no longer with the artist or the state of mind which he is trying to express, but with language, his instrument of expression. Language, the home and dwelling of beauty and meaning, itself begins to think and speak for man and turns wholly into music, not in the sense of outward, audible sounds but by virtue of the power and momentum of its inward flow. Then, like the current of a mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movement, the

[5] E. B. Sargeant, *An Account of Lord Nelson's Signal* (London, 1908).

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flow of speech creates in passing, by the force of its own laws, rhyme and rhythm and countless other forms and formations, still more important and until now undiscovered, unconsidered and unnamed.

At such moments Yuri felt that the main part of his work was not being done by him but by something which was above him and controlling him: the thought and poetry of the world as it was at that moment and as it would be in the future. He was controlled by the next step it was to take in the order of its historical development; and he felt himself to be only the pretext and the pivot setting it in motion.

This feeling relieved him for a time of self-reproach, of dissatisfaction with himself, of the sense of his own nothingness.[6]

The passage does more than merely confirm the role of language and of mastery, the way the relation of content and form is "stood on its head," as Pasternak puts it. It throws an additional light on the psychological relevance of this process, the way, as we read, in which the forces of language relieve the artist of his "self-reproach." It is the medium, not he, that is active and that expresses these thoughts. There is something objective in his discoveries that rids the work of art of the taint of subjectivity and exhibitionism. Even the idea of historical forces whose instrument the artist becomes at such a moment can be stripped of its Hegelian and "historicist" guise and placed in this objective context. For, surely, it is true that it is not only the medium and its potentialities but also the historical situation which the artist finds in the stylistic developments of his art which suggest, and sometimes even dictate, the solutions of which he makes use.

There is an element in all art—and certainly in all Western art—which might for brevity's sake be called the "cat's cradle" element. Art, as Malraux has stressed, is born of art. The young artist takes over the game from his predecessors and as he does so he introduces variations. In Western communities, at least, art has thus become a social game played among artists and the pattern that emerges with each move owes at least as much to the moves that have gone before as it owes to the ingenious variations introduced by the present player.

In the introductory chapter to his *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, Ernst Kris drew attention to this aspect: the development of art within a given problem-situation to which the artist adjusts and contributes. But the historian may be forgiven if he feels that in this problem of the interaction between medium, tradition, and personality a lot still remains to be done. If I may be permitted to quote a casual and private remark in this context, Ernest Jones himself expressed his perplexity to the writer as to what artists meant when they continually talked about "the problem"—the problem that is, with which their paintings confronted them. But to those who play the game of cat's cradle these are real problems which are at least as much part of reality as are the problems of science or of daily life. They are dictated by the situation and not by the artist's mood or childhood experience. Once he is engrossed in this task of creating intricate and meaningful structures nothing else can matter to the artist. The problem has taken command.

THERE IS a famous lecture by Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, which contains as telling an introspective account of the modern painter's experience of the game as Pasternak's moving description of the poet's experience. Klee describes the many elements, line, colour, shape, out of which the artist creates his order. Their importance, as he puts it, is decisive also in the negative sense since it is they which decide "whether a certain content may remain inexpressible despite the most favourable psychological disposition." Klee sees the artist as a builder of structures who lifts the element up into a new order:

> While the artist is still entirely absorbed in his effort to group these formal elements so neatly and logically that each is necessary in its place and none impairs the others, there will be some layman who has been looking over his shoulder ready with the devastating remark: "This does not yet look like a real man at all." If the painter has enough self-control he will think "real man" is neither here nor there, I must go on with my building.... This new building stone, he will tell himself, may be a shade too heavy and pulls the whole caboodle too much to the left; I shall have to put quite a telling counterpoise on the right to restore the balance.—And thus he alternates, adding something on either side till the pointer of the scales is centred. He will only be too glad if he finds that he did not have to upset the combination of a few suitable elements which had begun so well, at least no more than to introduce those contradictions and contrasts which, after all, are inseparable from any configuration that is alive.
>
> Sooner or later, however, an association may occur to him even without the intervention of a layman and nothing prevents him from accepting it if it presents itself under a very fitting name. This assent to a representation may occasionally suggest in its turn one or the other addition that has a necessary connection with the formulated reference. If the artist is lucky these representational supplementations can still be fitted to a passage which faintly seems to ask for

[6] The translation in the English edition was by Max Hayward and Manya Harari (London, 1959).

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them from a formal point of view and they look as if they had always belonged there.[7]

The psycho-analyst who is confronted with such an account may at first be tempted to doubt it. If he submits entirely to what I have called the centrifugal theory of artistic expression he will take it for granted that the artist always knew unconsciously what object would emerge and that the whole elaborate pretence at building a formal structure first is nothing but a rationalisation hiding the real process from the artist and his audience. But this is not the interpretation suggested by Freud's "centripetal" theory of wit. In this theory, it will be remembered, the aspect of play, the infantile pleasure in trying out combinations and permutations, is given due weight.

There must be (and there are) procedures in science and engineering where some medium or model is used for trying out structures through analogies and where techniques of systematic variation and permutation are used to discover fresh possibilities. The potentialities of these media—the way the analogue is and can be wired, as it were—its past history and results—all these form part of reality. To say that the experimentor knew somewhere, or somehow, beforehand which combination would prove useful for his purpose would surely be unrealistic. Wherever their disposition may stem from—and Freud never claimed to know the full answer—the painter will be inclined thus to play with forms, the musician with tones. Both of them may be no more able to predict these possibilities than anyone can predict what happens when we shake a kaleidoscope; but having shaken it we can admire and remember some of the results; we can even elaborate them when they strike us as meaningful while we discard and forget others. Hence the benefit even the greatest genius derives from the conventions of his time and from their mastery. Even a Mozart, when writing a light-hearted *divertimento*, may not have known or thought precisely what was going to happen to the simple theme he chose. But he knew that by putting it through the paces of certain modulations and developments something delightful was bound to emerge. Naturally his genius and his training made him select a theme suitable for this exercise, and even allowed him to foresee and reject out of the corner of his eye certain alternatives which would result in less interesting developments. But even a Mozart was indebted to the marvellous instrument of, say, the sonata or rondo form which his predecessors had handed to him and of which he had experienced the potentialities in continuous practice. The artist who thus experiments and plays —who looks for discoveries in language if he is a writer or a poet, in visual shapes if he is a painter—will no doubt select in that preconscious process of which Freud speaks the structures that will greet him as meaningful in terms of his mind and conflicts. But it is his art that informs his mind, not his mind that breaks through in his art. Just as the temptations of a pun may sometimes bring out an aggressive thought that would otherwise have remained unexpressed, so the structural possibilities of the cat's cradle or the shake of the kaleidoscope may sometimes bring out a mood or an experience that would have remained dormant in the artist but for this vital suggestion.

It is this aspect that needs stressing if we are to gain the full benefit of Freud's Theory of Wit. No psycho-analyst will be inclined to doubt the power of circumstance in "bringing out" a person's dormant or suppressed characteristic. When we say that "the emergency brought out the best in him" or that "army life brought out the worst in him" we mean precisely that these traits of the personality which would otherwise have been minimised by the conventions of every-day life were maximised by certain opportunities. Granted that it may be futile to ask whether it was the situation in literature that "brought out" the romantic in Byron or whether it was Byron's temperament and disposition that bent the tool of literature further in this direction, no serious analysis of an artist's life and art should ever neglect the centripetal force of traditions and trends. Even Byron's art is not all "self-expression." Nor, if it is not, need it therefore be an empty pose. The alternative between genuine expression and mere convention which both artists and critics have sometimes framed in Freudian terms finds no support in Freud's theory of art.

AT LEAST one artist challenged Freud to spell out his views of this problem, and the precious record of this exchange is also published in the correspondence. It was Yvette Guilbert, the great *diseuse*, who in 1931 sought Freud's opinion about the actor's psychology. Clearly, she seems to have implied, the idea of self-expression must break down here since what makes a great actor is the capacity to identify with any number of different characters.[8] From Yvette Guilbert's autobiography, *La*

[7] Paul Klee, *Ueber die Moderne Kunst* (Bern-Büempliz, 1945).

[8] The actress could here rely on the authority of Diderot's famous dialogue on acting, *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*.

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Chanson de Ma Vie, it is obvious why this problem concerned her so much. She had gained her success with *chansons* of most dubious morality, representing on the stage prostitutes and criminals. She had been hurt and worried by the vulgar identification of the actress with the characters she portrayed, and she had naturally stressed the distance that separates the two.

Freud did not want to allow her this easy way out:

> I should like to understand more about this and would certainly tell you all I know. Since I don't understand much of it I would ask you to be satisfied with the following hints. I would think that what you assumed to be the psychological mechanism of your art has been very frequently asserted, perhaps universally so. Yet this idea of the surrender of one's own person and its replacement by an imagined one has never satisfied me very much. It says so little, it naturally does not tell how it is done and, most of all, it does not tell us why something which allegedly all artists desire succeeds so much better in one case than in another. I would rather believe that something of the opposite mechanism must also come into play. Not that the actor's own person is eliminated but rather that elements of it—for instance, undeveloped dispositions and suppressed wishes—are used for the representation of intended characters and thus are allowed expression which gives the character concerned its truth to life. This may be less simple than that transparency of the ego you imagine. Naturally I would be eager to know whether you can sense anything of that other aspect. In any case this would be no more than one contribution towards the solution of the beautiful secret of why we shudder when we hear your *"Voularde"* or assent with all our senses when you ask *"Dites-moi si je suis belle."* But so little is known. (*8 March, 1931*)

The actress was not satisfied, and in his next letter Freud enjoys what he calls "the interesting experience" of having to defend his theory against Yvette Guilbert and her husband, Max Schiller:

> Really I have no intention of giving in to you, beyond confessing that we know so little. Look, for example, Charlie Chaplin was in Vienna.... He is undoubtedly a great artist though admittedly he always acts one and the same character, the weakly poor helpless and awkward youth for whom however things turn out well in the end. Do you believe that he had to forget his own ego playing this role? On the contrary he always acts himself as he was in his sad youth. He cannot get away from these experiences and still derives compensation to-day for the hardships and humiliations of those times. His is, as it were, a particularly simple and transparent case.
>
> The idea that an artist's achievements are conditioned internally by childhood impressions, destiny, suppressions and disappointments has yielded much enlightenment to us and that is why we set great store by it. I once ventured to approach one of the very greatest, an artist of whom unfortunately all too little is known, Leonardo da Vinci. I was able at least to make it probable that his St. Anne, which you can visit every day in the Louvre, would not be intelligible without the peculiar childhood story of Leonardo. Nor, possibly, would other works.
>
> Now you will say that Madame Yvette has more than a single role, she embodies with equal mastery all possible characters; saints and sinners, coquettes, the virtuous, criminals and *ingénues*. That is true and it proves an unusually rich and adaptable psychic life. But I would not despair of tracing back her whole repertory to the experiences and conflicts of her early years. It would be tempting to continue here but something keeps me back. I know that unsolicited analyses cause annoyance and I would not like to do anything to disturb the cordial sympathy of our relationship. (*26 March 1931.*)

How sad it seems for us now that this fascinating exchange was terminated in a polite agreement to disagree. For if Yvette Guilbert had followed the hint and gone back to Freud's paper on Leonardo she would not only have found there the idea which Freud considered "probable," that the St. Anne reflected Leonardo's childhood story; she would also have found a much better documented account of Leonardo's intriguing playfulness, his enjoyment of riddles and fantasies. Moreover, she could have reminded Freud of his own eloquent description in the opening pages of his study of Leonardo's many sketches "each of which varies every one of the motifs that occur in his paintings in the most manifold manner... displaying a wealth of possibilities between which he often wavers." Putting these two observations side by side she might have shown how many of the features of Leonardo's Louvre picture were pre-figured in earlier drawings of the Virgin and Child in which the interaction of mother and son is studied in ever fresh permutations. Thus, taking her cue from this "historical romance" she might have described to Freud what she was to describe in her memoirs —her own fascination with her medium and her ceaseless desire to explore and master all the potentialities of this instrument. It is not enough, we read there, for an actress or *diseuse* to articulate clearly:

> In addition she must be able to set any word aflame or extinguish it, to bathe it in light or plunge it in darkness, to throw it in relief or to soften it, to caress it or grasp it harshly, to advance or withdraw it, to envelop it or expose it naked, to extend or shorten it. Anything that brings a text to life or kills it, anything that makes for vigour, colour, style, that imparts

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elegance or vulgarity, all this science was the constant object of my endeavours.

The story is told (and it is an authentic story) of a young singer who approached Yvette Guilbert for lessons. She declined, but she gave the aspiring artist one piece of advice: to practise any simple statement such as *"Prenez place, Madame"* in some twenty different nuances from haughtiness to humility and pity. The way in which this phrase is said could reveal a whole situation.

Clearly in playing this game the great actress would not have to rely on situations she experienced in her childhood. What may be connected with her history and disposition is not the mastery itself but the will to obtain mastery, the interest in what can be done with language, the enjoyment of the game. True, if we may venture to reconstruct a dialogue that never took place, once this mastery was achieved certain combinations and configurations of tone and language might indeed have evoked a particular response in the artist, an echo from her own past—it is here that what Freud calls "undeveloped dispositions and suppressed wishes" might have found an outlet inducing the actress to work on these with special zest and to embody these opportunities in her repertory. If that happened Freud might therefore have succeeded in making good his claim that he could trace these numbers in her programme back to their origins in an early personality trait—while Yvette Guilbert would still have remained right in claiming that the actor's art is rooted in the mastery of countless expressive elements.

IT IS THIS MASTERY ALONE which can arouse and liberate the dormant memories that come to life in the performance. Are we straining the meaning of Freud's words too much if we find this compromise implied in Freud's own remarks in the earlier of these two letters? He merely reminds the actress, after all, that besides her skill in impersonation "*something* of the opposite mechanism must *also* come into play" (my italics). There is nothing here that contradicts his observations in the letter about Dali that "the concept of art resists an extension beyond the point where the quantitative proportion between unconscious material and preconscious elaboration is not kept within certain limits."

The interpreter of the utterances of an admired master must especially guard against the danger of "Talmudism": the temptation to read into the text whatever he desires to propound. There are many questions that remain open in Freud's theory of art, but it seems to me that there is nothing in his published writings and letters that conflicts with his outlook and his taste which are so firmly based on conservative standards. Unlike some of his less cautious followers, moreover, Freud never claimed to be in possession of the answer. He always stressed that "we know so little." It remains true.

"Ode to Autumn"

Insect beads crawl on the warm soil,
Black carapaces; brittle harvest spiders
Clamber weightlessly among dry roots
In soundless bedlam. He sits still, writing,
A phantasm of flesh, at the edge of the wheatfield
while thy hook spares . . .
Ripened leagues, a plain of odorous seed,
Quiet scope, season of mastery,
The last of peace. Among ethereal summits,
A gleam of disintegrating materials
Held a frail instant at unearthly heights.

Thomas Kinsella.

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Patrick Morgan

Nocturne

It is one of those nights tonight,
when, face to darkness with the ungraspable,
neither to be, nor to be not, brings
any succour to the mind.
It is one of those nights tonight,
when the trap that is life bites harder
than usual, and one hates the unimaginative,
obeisant earth, and its perennial orbitation
around this candle-affair, this tepid sun
that lights up the universal cage.
It is one of those nights tonight
when to despise is stronger than to love,
when to fear is larger than to sleep,
and to despair, more painful than to sing.
When life of a sudden is a vast abyss,
as usual, except that we realise,
more clearly, that it is long since
that we lept off the cliff of birth,
and there is nothing left to us now
but the term downwards. No longer is death
a facile word; there is no sort of
consolation, no hope, no form of escape
for the logical and the brave.
Man is a great boatsman, a great
builder of ships, a rusty sailor
who can weather the storm; a battled captain
who cannot turn back the wave.
It is one of those nights tonight
when the focused brain peers
and sees not, when the attentive ear
listens and hears not, and one longs
for the rugged bestiality of the bear
or the natural elegance of the antelope;
the unworried power of the lion's paw,
the sleekness of the tiger, the hyena's
crude hunger, the quiet unintelligence
that blesses the jungle grass. Anything
but humanity!
It is one of those nights tonight,
when life, turned loose, runs naked
crying in the inhuman wilderness, knowing,
full well, there is no solution in the blood.
When one sits, face to face with
The Other Man; the one who can wait
and is always waiting; the one who watches
in the sky, with the lightning, and whose grimace
is always gone, after the storm subsides;
whose teeth shine, and whose eyes,
though one glance often, are always hollow. . . .

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NOTES & TOPICS

Sociologese?

FOR REASONS which Mr. W. G. Runciman incisively suggests [ENCOUNTER, Dec. 1965], I have often been put in the ambiguous position of being told, "You do not write as badly as those other sociologists; you are really one of us" —"us" being the humanists, the literary critics, or the men of general culture. But then I am also apt to be told, "Why do you use such terrible jargon as *anomie* or *charisma*, or *privatisation*?" and a good many readers cannot distinguish between my personal jargon and that which I borrow from my professional colleagues. (Looking over my past writings, there is much that makes me wince, but that is another story.) When praise comes, I am on the alert to reject the implicit condescension, much as I am when Europeans say, "You are not like those other Americans." There are now, in fact, many sociologists, American or otherwise, whose way of looking at society would appear to be distinctively sociological and who write with clarity, economy, even elegance; consider Robert K. Merton, Ralf Dahrendorf, Everett Hughes, among many others. The boundaries of the discipline are not important, but the immense variety of outlook and topic within it are important; and if general intellectual culture appropriates works by sociologists, this leakage is gained, not lost.

What puzzles me is why, among all the egregious evils of this world, those of bad writing or pretentiousness among one or another cadre of academicians should loom so large. Mr. Runciman proposes some perceptive explanations for the hostility, but not for its degree and extent. Here I would add that intellectuals and academicians in the humanities very seldom feel that they can attack the whole modern world *tout court*. The intellectual, even poetic, achievements of the great natural scientists and mathematicians are too impressive, and the consequences of their work too much with us, to be so easily dismissed. But sociology, when it claims the mantle of the natural sciences, while lacking its power or elegance, can be easily ridiculed, for (like a Chinese in Indonesia, or a Jew in Frankfurt), it possesses more money, more show, than substantive political power. Thus it can serve as a scapegoat for people, whether of the Right or of the Left, whose view of modern life is fundamentally hostile and whose view of the past is nostalgic. This imputation of motives, of course, says nothing about the truth of the charges, but only deals with the question of why people care so much, why they so often get angry rather than laugh or are indifferent.

But one can also ask about motives or other personal factors on the side of men of great intelligence and sensitivity, whom Mr. Runciman mentions, and their addiction to cluttered professional prose. In Max Weber's case, the thought itself is difficult rather than his style, and his personal torments and self-mistrust may be an element in this, along with his scrupulous refinement, which led him to make many qualifications in a self-protective way. Furthermore, phrases such as "*achievement-oriented*" or "*need-achievement*" were, if I am not mistaken, invented by colleagues and friends of mine, Harry Murray and David C. McClelland, whom I know to be men of exquisite sensibilities, of unusual aesthetic interests and gifts. It has occurred to me that they may be driven by a kind of asceticism precisely because they are poetic men of feeling who (as one of them once put it in conversation) have chosen to deal with soft data in a hard way. Less gifted researchers are then brought to these terms, not only by their wooden or dead-pan qualities, but also by the evident distinction of the men who coined them, and in whose own total body of work they occupy a peripheral place, like an ikon corner.

AS A TEACHER I try to persuade students neither to be unduly attracted nor unduly allergic to the verbal scaffolding which leads individual scholars to their generalisations concerning human society. These scaffoldings, as Mr. Runciman says, will either become part of the general intellectual architecture or will pass with time. They serve the discoverers for morale, perhaps for masochism, or, indeed, exhibitionism, as marks of modesty or of grandeur, as shorthand or for decompression. The terms used are not irrelevant; they register some sort of verdict on the material or on the world as a whole, and I do not ask my students to be tone deaf to such implications. What I do hope is that these idiosyncratic dialects can be regarded with less snobbery and less emotion, much as we are inclined today out of empathy, as well as out of tolerance, to treat gently ethnic dialects we no longer satirise on the air or the music hall stage.

David Riesman

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Concrete Poetry

> *I invented the colour of vowels—A, black; E, white; I, red; O, blue; U, green—I controlled the form and movement of each consonant, and flatter myself that, with instinctive rhythm, I might invent some day or other, a poetic verb accessible to all five senses. I reserved the right of translation. At first, it was an experiment. I wrote silences. Nights. I took notes of the inexpressible. I transfixed vertigos.*
>
> RIMBAUD

"BETWEEN Poetry and Painting"—the exhibition of concrete poetry recently held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London—was notable on more than one count. Not the least of these was the attention it got. True, the way had been prepared to some extent by two previous, though much smaller, exhibitions—one held at Oxford and one at Cambridge. But here was something which seemed very alien to the prevailing literary climate in England. Indeed, few of the participants were English. A glance at the catalogue showed them to be German, South American, French, Hungarian, and Scots. They clearly belonged to the international, uninhibited world of modern art—not to the ingrown, priggish, and provincial one of contemporary British poetry. Though the plaudits which the exhibition received came largely from art-critics and people concerned with the visual arts, it was, I believe, more significant as a literary event than as an artistic one, and this for reasons which are largely historical.

As the show itself proved, concrete poetry is difficult to define. Basically, it is a hybrid: an attempt to marry literary content with abstract design in a new and more intimate way. Words are used to make pictures; and words *become* pictures. Typography mirrors the event described. But there are, in fact, several other kinds of poetry linked to pure "concrete." Most important of them, perhaps, is "sound poetry," where structures in type are replaced by structures in sound, from which recognisable words may or may not emerge. But whatever form it takes, the movement is at the moment an odd mixture of solemn manifestos and playful invention; the professional side by side with the amateurish.

Where art is concerned, concrete poetry fits quite comfortably into an already established convention. Like Op Art and kinetic art, it has its roots in the experiments made just before and just after World War I. The use of words and letters as pictorial elements goes back to the Cubists on one hand, and to Dada on the other. The preoccupation with typography can be seen among the pioneer Russians (Lissitsky is a good example), and the Italian Futurists (*e.g.* Soffici).

Quite apart from this, there is a long tradition of making pictures with words. The ancient Chinese did it; and so did the Hellenistic Greeks. It was the kind of thing which fascinated the Mannerists: typographical pictographs were a typical Mannerist "conceit." I own a book of Latin poems by an Elizabethan writer named Richard Willy, which was published in 1573, and contains some good specimens of the *genre*. It evidently interested one of the leading writers of the day, as it has George Gascoigne's signature on the title-page. Later on, the Metaphysicals wrote English poetry of the same kind. George Herbert's "Easter Wings" is a famous example.

WHAT IS MORE interesting, however, is the fact that concrete poetry represents a renewal of the old alliance between *avant-garde* art and modern poetry, which formed so striking a feature of the original Modern Movement. The two figures who stand behind some of the experiments being made today are Guillaume Apollinaire and Kurt Schwitters. Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, with their playful elegance, are only very marginally "concrete," and it is Kurt Schwitters, and particularly his little book *Anna Blume*, who has exercised the more direct influence.

Nevertheless, Apollinaire is, for the moment, the figure I want to refer to; if only because he was primarily a poet, and not, like Schwitters, primarily an artist. As the friend and ally of painters he was, in his own epoch, far from being unique. Mayakovsky seems to have played a very similar role in Russia. In England, Eliot was the associate of Wyndham Lewis, and Pound the promoter of Gaudier-Brzeska. In addition to his friendship with Apollinaire, Picasso was on close terms with Max Jacob, and later with Paul Eluard. It is often said, today, that Apollinaire misinterpreted the Cubists.

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Pierre Garnier (1964)

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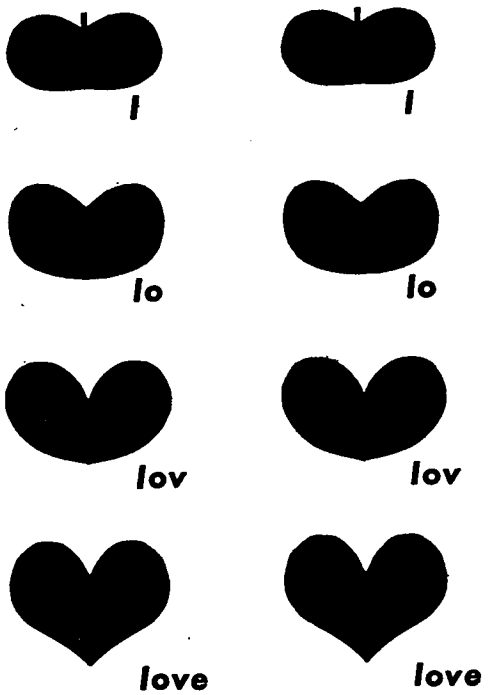
This seems to me much less important than the mere fact that the association existed.

Since the war, such alliances have been less in evidence. But nowhere have the poets drifted farther apart from the painters than in England. This was partly due to the exhausted condition of immediately post-war English painting, but still more to the bias against high culture exhibited by the Movement. Until now, there has been little effort to renew the bond. In America, to point the contrast, certain writers set out quite deliberately to forge a new link. Frank O'Hara, a poet who has collaborated closely with Larry Rivers, and who is now on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, says that the poets originally turned to the painters because no-one else in New York was then at all responsive to what they were trying to do—it was only among painters that the tradition of experiment was still accepted.



Ian Hamilton Finlay

Concrete poetry has not, however, struck firm root in the United States, though there are one or two practitioners in San Francisco. O'Hara's own work still exhibits that concern for subjective "truth" which has characterised American literature for the past fifteen years. The concrete poet, on the other hand, is not concerned with the idea of "being," but rather with that of "making" or "structuring." American poets tend to reject concrete poetry because of its constructed quality—its lack of spontaneity. The contrast is very much that between Abstract Expressionism and the renewal of the *Bauhaus* tradition which has taken place in South America and Germany, which are, in fact, the principal strongholds of the movement. The literature in German concerning concrete poetry is considerable, and German magazines publish work of this kind in all languages. The little magazine *Rot*, for instance, has just published a fat "International Concrete Poetry" issue. *Konkrete Poesie*, emanating from Frauenfeld in Switzerland, has published at least nine issues, including two in English—one devoted to the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, and one to that of Edwin Morgan.

Mention of these two Scottish poets brings me to the situation of the new movement in Britain. The reasons why concrete poetry has implanted itself so firmly in Scotland, and, till now, so comparatively feebly in England, are obviously complex. It is not only that Scotland has a tradition of intellectual experiment. Other factors seem to have been at work. What these are may perhaps be guessed from the pamphlet *The Ugly Birds Without Wings*, in which Hugh McDiarmid angrily denounced some of the leading writers connected with the movement at a time (1962) when it had barely established itself in Scotland. Concrete poetry seems, among other things, to have been a way of throwing off the shackles of an oppressive Scottish nationalism. Ian Hamilton Finlay, the leading writer and theorist of concrete poetry now writing in English, enjoys a curious position in the literary scene. Though he has never had a book issued by an established publisher, he has done a good many pamphlets with various small *avant-garde* presses (one of these has gone into at least three editions; another into two, with a third pending). He is the force behind a small publisher called The Wild Hawthorn Press, which, in turn, issues an interesting magazine called *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.* Another little magazine established in Scotland, *Extra Verse*, recently devoted a whole issue to his work, with a check-list of his writings.

All of this centres upon a talent which strikes me as charming and elegant, but often rather slight. It is, however, easy to do an injustice to Hamilton Finlay if one forgets the isolated circumstances in which he finds himself. When I recently described some of his imagery as "Georgian" and "sentimental," he wrote to me, with a good deal of justice: "It would take a great fool not to see that warm or positive feelings about fields, horizons, sails, little boats, etc. are going to look sentimental to a critic in —say—London, so long as he judges by categories (as he is almost certain to do). If one

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wanted to avoid such a charge, one would merely need to write cynically about love affairs, streets, monuments, governments, and bombs. ... If sentimentality is—very roughly—the over-celebration of trivial and unexamined feeling, then I think we have a great deal of it ... though it meanwhile passes as 'stark,' 'profound,' 'objective,' etc...." Nevertheless, one remains conscious of a certain limitation in most concrete poetry, Hamilton Finlay's included—the fact that the techniques being used can encompass only rather simple statements. It is for this reason that concrete poetry seems unlikely to establish itself as the dominant mode in English verse, despite the attention which it is now getting. In saying this, it would still be churlish not to acknowledge the value of such experiments, both in themselves, and as part of an attitude towards literature.

There is also, on my own part at least, the hope that events such as the exhibition at the I.C.A. will help to jolt English poetry out of the state of complacent naturalism in which it now reposes. A renewal of the link with experimental art can do it nothing but good.

Edward Lucie-Smith

Churchill Considered Historically

By A. L. Rowse

"CHURCHILL Reconsidered"? It is important to depict the other side of the diptych, if only as a matter of historic justice.

On one fundamental point I am in agreement with Goronwy Rees [ENCOUNTER, Nov.]. "It was Churchill's merit as a politician which also gave him his claim to greatness as a statesman, precisely that from youth upwards he instinctively understood that war was the determining factor in the history of the 20th century and had the courage to face and accept the consequences." It is not necessary to go further and say that Churchill regarded war as "the ultimate reality of our time"; I do not think that Churchill regarded it as such. It is enough that he had the historic perception of the constant role of war in human society, and that from practically his first speech in Parliament, in 1901, he had the foresight to see that "the wars of peoples will be more terrible than those of kings."

In an epoch that has been ravaged by the wars of nations and peoples Churchill stands out among all democratic statesmen in knowing what the movement of our time has been about. It relegates the others, Baldwin, Chamberlain, MacDonald, Woodrow Wilson, who did not know the real forces of the time they lived in, to the second rank.

But Mr. Rees' other main point about Churchill is as fundamentally wrong. He tells us that his career up to the war "had been singularly barren of any solid or permanent political achievement." On the contrary, it was more fruitful of achievement than any other political career of the century in Britain. Let us go into the historical record.

1. Churchill was one of the prime architects of the Welfare State—second only to Lloyd George. As President of the Board of Trade, 1908–1910, Churchill set up the Trade Boards and created the Labour Exchanges. He could have tried these new developments out cautiously on a merely local basis, experimentally. Not a bit of it: he came down in favour of a full-blown national scheme of Labour Exchanges. He had his strategic eye on something further—a national system of unemployment insurance. Beforehand as usual, he got his civil servants to prepare a practical scheme for when the time came; and this was the draft that was put into effect in 1911. Beveridge cites Churchill's brief Presidency of the Board of Trade as a striking illustration of "how much the personality of the Minister in a few critical months may change the course of social legislation."

2. Churchill carried on the good work at the Home Office, to which he was promoted in 1910. Where previous Home Secretaries had been content to administer the system as it was, he at once got powers to reform it. He was rightly shocked at the large numbers of boys incarcerated for nothing much, often merely for sleeping out. Churchill got his powers enacted to initiate the modern era of prison reform. He was held up by the constitutional conflict with the House of Lords. "If only we could get it shunted," he would say to his civil servants, "think of all we could do!—boy-prisoners, truck-system, the feeble-minded."

It was during this period that the Tonypandy episode took place, which was always used to throw demagogic mud at Churchill. Since Mr.

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Rees brings it up as usual, let me put him right on it. There were riots and disorder in the district as the result of a strike. As Home Secretary Churchill was responsible for public order, the Conservative opposition wanted him to send in troops—from which there might have been bloodshed; a Liberal Minister, he sent in civilian police—there was no bloodshed and order was restored. So much for the old Welsh war-cry about Tonypandy!

3. From 1911 to 1915 Churchill was in the crucial post, so far as the safety of the nation was concerned, as First Lord of the Admiralty. He was sent there by Asquith to press on the work of overhauling the Navy, bringing it up to the highest standards of efficiency to meet the deadly challenge to Britain's very existence that was coming from Germany's determination to challenge her on the seas, in addition to already possessing the most powerful army in the world.

Churchill encountered intense opposition from entrenched and embedded conservative-minded Admirals; he raised as much hostility here among the second-rate as he did everywhere else among people of inveterate inferiority of mind. Naturally they could not understand him—or stand him. Impossible to recount all that he achieved here, all that he drove through against opposition, both within the Navy and from the Left-wing illusionists in the government and the Liberal party who would scarcely admit the necessity for it or realise the almighty danger.

He pressed forward regardless, fighting on two fronts. The first necessity was for the creation of a Navy war staff: he brought it into being, against the will of his First Sea-Lord, Wilson, who went. The Navy had gone over to oil: Churchill assured its supplies by "a brilliant stroke" (Admiral Sir William James' phrase)—the secret contract by which the British government got its holding in Anglo-Persian and priority in supplies was won.

There are many examples of where Churchill's clairvoyance was proved superior to that of the professional seamen. The three old cruisers, *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*, were on an exposed patrol when they were sunk by submarines on 22nd September, 1914; on 18th September Churchill had already minuted, on his own: "These cruisers ought not to continue on this beat. The risk to such ships is not justified by any service they can render." There were similar warnings he had given about the insufficient armour-plating of the *Queen Mary* and her sister-ships, sunk by plunging shellfire at Jutland. His warnings had not been heeded: it was to become a familiar experience with him.

It may not be realised how much the development of the tank, that cardinal invention in modern warfare, owed to Churchill. The War Office, ossified by stupidity and tradition, refused to carry on the experiments that led to their production. Churchill took the matter under his wing at the Admiralty, though it was no business of his. He took "personal responsibility for the expenditure of the public money involved, about £70,000. I did not inform the War Office, for I knew they would raise objections." The experiments he had encouraged went slowly forward after he left the Admiralty: it took the High Command two years before they brought a few tanks into action on the Somme. "This priceless conception, containing if used in its integrity and on a sufficient scale, the certainty of a great and brilliant victory, was revealed to the Germans for the mere purpose of taking a few ruined villages."

One doesn't need to labour the point of his adaptability of mind in regard to the techniques of war. Nor that the greatest obstruction he found all through life came from ordinary people's stupidity and lack of imagination.

4. We come to the crucial test of the Dardanelles. Mr. Rees places "a large part of the blame for that disaster, both in its planning and its execution" upon Churchill. There are other, better judges who do not. Clem Attlee, whose judgment is hardly ever at fault and who served in Gallipoli, has always been convinced that Churchill was right. He has called it the one original and imaginative strategic concept of the war. Admiral Keyes, the daring type who was prevented by his cautious second-rate seniors from pushing through, said after the war when sailing up the Dardanelles: "My God, it would have been easier than I thought; we simply *couldn't* have failed. And because we didn't try, another million lives were thrown away and the war went on for another three years."

I am not qualified to pronounce on this professional issue. What I do know is that the mistake Winston made was political: he should have involved the War Office and the Admiralty, Kitchener and Admiral Fisher, in the responsibility. Churchill, honest and sincere to a fault, never feared to take all the responsibility on himself. He was not a slim politician. The Tories, who never forgave him for his apostasy in becoming a Liberal, brought him down over this. They thought that they had finished him.

5. It was Lloyd George—that other man of genius, who understood genius when he saw it—who brought Churchill back from being wasted on the Western Front to be Minister of Munitions in 1917. Lloyd George is the best witness to what he achieved: "owing to the energy which Mr. Winston Churchill threw into the production of munitions, between March 1st and August 1st the strength of the

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Tank Corps increased by 27 per cent, and that of the Machine Gun Corps by 41 per cent, while the number of aeroplanes in France rose by 40 per cent."

6. Churchill has been made to take the whole responsibility for the intervention in Russia. Of course, he was in favour of it and, with his usual courage, and regardlessness of consequences, he championed it—though he had no responsibility for the origins of it. B. H. Sumner, our leading authority on Russian history, once put me right about this. He pointed out that when Lenin took Russia out of the war, we were still fighting the Germans; it was only natural that we should seek to stiffen what resistance we could to them inside Russia, safeguard the munitions and supplies we had sent to Archangel, prevent the oil-wells of Baku from falling into German hands. Hence the British forces at Archangel and in the Caucasus.

Of course, Churchill was anti-Bolshevik. He was not afraid to express his conviction that the Western powers "would learn to regret the fact that they had not been able to take a more decided and more united action to crush the Bolshevik peril before it had grown too strong." It may not have been practical politics, but are many practical politicians capable of taking such long-term views, seeing events in historical perspective? Looking at the history of the world since, at the sufferings men have endured from Lenin's seizure of power, the millions of lives sacrificed by it, can one say that he was wrong? He was defeated, as often in his career—but that is quite a different matter. He really detested tyranny of any kind; he loved freedom and free men. Perhaps that is why free men everywhere—not in Britain alone—rallied to him in the end.

7. One of the best things Lloyd George's Coalition government accomplished was the Anglo-Irish Treaty settlement, giving practical independence to Eire—which a Conservative government would never have done. Churchill's part in this was second only to Lloyd George. The Irish leader, Michael Collins, sent a farewell message—before he was murdered by his own people: "Tell Winston we could never have done anything without him."

8. As Secretary of State for Air and for the Colonies, 1921–1922, Churchill was primarily responsible for the settlement of the Middle East that endured right up to the Second World War and beyond. Against all the probabilities, for the First World War had freed the Arab people from the Turkish yoke and produced an upheaval out of which it was unlikely that any order could be wrested. T. E. Lawrence is the best witness here, in inscribing a copy of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to "Winston Churchill who made a happy ending to this show. And eleven years after we set our hands to making an honest settlement, all our work still stands: the countries having gone forward, our interests having been saved, and nobody killed, either on our side or the other. To have planned for eleven years is statesmanship."

Nothing lasts for ever in politics. To have achieved a solid settlement of the Middle East that lasted to the Second World War was in itself a tremendous service to Britain when the hour of her peril came; for the Arab peoples involved, it made an important step in their political evolution. Nor was Churchill wrong in being an early supporter of a national home for the Jews in Palestine; it was only an elementary act of human justice—and after all that had been done for the Arabs!

9. By Churchill's stand over Chanak in 1922 he stopped the Turks short of Constantinople; they withdrew, and shortly signed an armistice. He got no credit from the Tories for this: they took the opportunity of the public alarm to overthrow the Coalition.

10. Evidently Mr. Rees thinks that Churchill was a failure as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924 to 1929. This is not the view of the economic historian of the period, Ursula Hicks, who calls him dramatic, resourceful, ingenious. It is true that Churchill felt out of water here and over economic matters lacked his usual confidence. The ironical thing is that his own instinct was (rightly) against the return to the gold standard at dollar parity, but he was overborne by all the experts, and the combined weight of the Treasury and the Bank of England. Even Keynes agreed that "if we are to return to gold, and in the face of general opinion that is inevitable, the Chancellor, the Treasury and the Bank have contributed to do so along the most prudent and far-sighted lines which were open to them."

When Churchill left the Treasury in 1929 he was contemplating expansionist measures—instead of the restrictive deflationary measures the National government clamped down in 1931, completely contrary to common sense. Churchill's intuition, as usual, was better. Mrs. Hicks tells us that the country would have done better with Snowden's careful financial orthodoxy in the earlier years, and have profited by Churchill's unorthodox, expansionist bent in the depression. As usual, we got the worst of both worlds.

11. Was Churchill so very wrong about India? If so, ponder his words—a generous judgment should admit that the achievements of British rule in India constitute one of the shining spectacles of history. "War has been banished from India; her frontiers have been defended from invasion from the north; famine has been

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gripped and controlled. Justice has been given —equal between race and race, impartial between man and man."

Actually, in later years Churchill came round to accept the hand-over in India as inevitable—so Beaverbrook told me. But what may be unavoidable is not always what is best for the people involved, and defeated causes in history are not necessarily the wrong ones.

12. What Churchill did for Britain, for Europe and for humanity in the years 1940 to 1945 is part of world-history. It is on account of that that the whole world, not Britain alone, showed grief at his passing and poured out gratitude for his life.

13. If Roosevelt won the war for us, it may also be said that he lost the peace, so far as Russia was concerned. Churchill himself tells us what he felt:

> Britain, though still very powerful, could not act decisively alone. I could at this stage only warn and plead. Thus this climax of apparently measureless success was to me a most unhappy time. I moved among cheering crowds, or sat at a table adorned with congratulations and blessings from every part of the Grand Alliance, with an aching heart and a mind oppressed with forebodings.

At Roosevelt's death and for some time afterwards American foreign policy was in confusion, indeed on a wrong course. Churchill was out of power; Ernest Bevin was left to stone-wall against Stalin alone. But with Churchill's Fulton speech in 1946 he got his chance to alert the United States to the full danger, the aggressions of Communist policy: *there* were the real Imperialists today.

The Fulton speech was as badly received in America as his warnings about Hitler had been in the bemused Britain of the 1930s. But within a matter of months—with the seizure of power in Czechoslovakia, the glaring injustice perpetrated upon Poland, and the rest of it—the true character of Stalin's policy was brought home to American opinion. Churchill's warnings had been justified. American policy changed course. I can think of no other case in history where a private citizen of one country has had such an impact upon the policy of another. It was from this time that Americans began to look upon him as one of their own. Later on, by Act of Congress, they made him an honorary citizen—a unique honour. But, then, he *was* a unique person.

14. The influence is continuing. There is the prophetic insight expressed in Churchill's last book, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. He understood very well that it was all over with the British Empire. Very well, what did the future hold for us? He saw that the separate histories of our peoples were coming to merge—in the transformation of the world in our time—in the larger stream of the English-speaking peoples all over the world. To play our part in that is our best chance.

From this brief summary we may see how absurd it is to say that, even up to the Second World War, Churchill "had no great legislative or administrative achievement to his credit": Mr. Rees simply hasn't done his homework. History shows that no one had a greater.

IMPOSSIBLE here to do justice to that all-round, outsize personality. But we must say something, since much has been made of it, about his peculiar relationship to the public and his position in party-politics. Everything about him was exceptional, rather above life-size, like his sheer intellectual energy, which gave trouble to all the Cabinets he was ever in.

In the first place, we must observe that if it had not been for the collapse of the Liberal Party he would have gone on being an effective Liberal all his life—there would have been no return to the Conservative party. (I can testify that in his private conversation in his last years he did not speak of himself as a Conservative: he would refer to the party as "they." He sat upon an Olympus above the petty views of party-politics.)

But when the Liberal party collapsed beneath him, what was he to do? Consign himself to useless ineffectiveness for the rest of his life?

He always was anti-socialist in his economics —so he joined up with the Conservatives. It was the sensible thing for him to do. If only he could have galvanised that corpse, which proceeded, under Baldwin and Chamberlain, to well-nigh ruin their country!

The fact was that, like all the ablest people in politics, Churchill was really a man of the Centre. He was *not* a reactionary; he was, as we have seen, and remained a Welfare State man, very proud of his social legislation. He didn't believe in socialist economics, any more than I do; he believed in hard work, energy, initiative, the necessity for incentives for a society to be efficient. Precisely what Soviet Russia is emphasising now!

It must be admitted that Churchill was not a good party-politician. Neither was Gladstone, nor was Lloyd George; it is always the Bonar Laws and Baldwins and Chamberlains who are that.

WHAT ABOUT Consistency in politics?

The greatest of Cornishmen, Sir Humphry Davy, the scientist, said: "Consistency with regard to opinion is the slow poison of intellectual life." Sir Winston has told us what he

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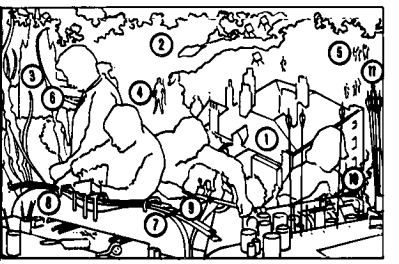
THE BOW AND ARROW MAKER



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Les Howis is not only a professional bowyer and fletcher, but is also a champion bowman. The equipment he makes is therefore of the finest quality and can be tried out by toxophilists, both experts and tyros, on the large butts **5** immediately adjacent to the Hall.

The bows, appropriately named 'Knight', **6** 'Outlaw', 'Bandit', etc. are made in the workshops of Cresswell, some eight miles from Edwinstowe. Laminations of glass fibre and Canadian Hard Rock Maple **7** are built on a special jig seen in **8**. The natural beauty of grain and texture of such woods as Indian Laurel, Brazilian Rosewood and other exotic hardwoods, together with careful shaping **9** of the graceful flowing curves gives each completed bow a unique individuality.

The shafts of the gaily coloured yet deadly accurate arrows, seen in **10** are now made from aluminium alloy or glass fibre tubing. Nocks to fit the bow string, and the fletching areas, are specially treated to receive flights of carefully selected turkey feathers **11**.

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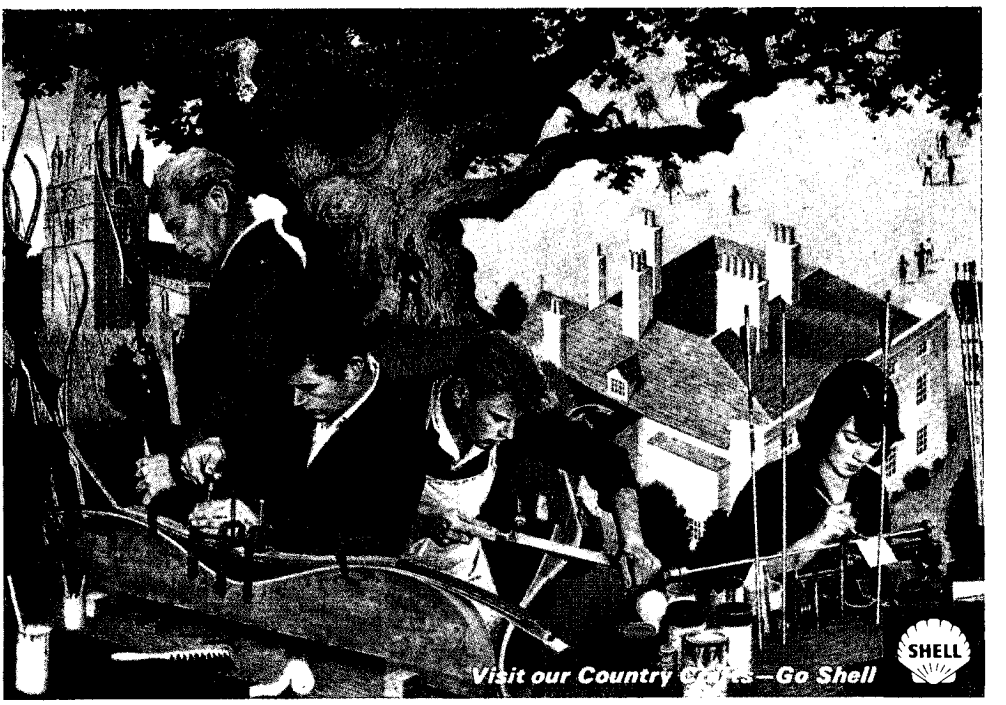

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A Splash of Colour

The advertisement overleaf is the first in full colour to appear in ENCOUNTER. It was printed by Kent Art Printers Ltd., of Rochester and initiates a series which Shell will be running in this magazine throughout 1966.

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thinks on this subject so often made a charge against him:

> The only way a man can remain consistent amid changing circumstances is to change with them while preserving the same dominating purpose.... It is evident that a political leader responsible for the direction of affairs must, even if unchanging in heart or objective, give his counsel now on the one side and now on the other of many public issues.... A change of Party is usually considered a much more serious breach of consistency than a change of view. In fact, as long as a man works with a Party he will rarely find himself accused of inconsistency.

And that is about the length and breadth of it. The most inveterate, the most envenomed, the most effective distrust directed against Churchill really came from the unspeakable Tories, who kept both him and Lloyd George out of power as long as they could—the two men of genius the country had at its disposal in the last days of its greatness. If we had only had Lloyd George to deal with unemployment and internal affairs, and Churchill to deal with re-armament and the renewed threat from Germany, we need never have had the Second World War and ourselves conspired to bring about our decline to a second-rate power in the world.

But people don't like to be told home-truths: that is one reason for their dislike of Churchill, up until it was too late. And people, especially in democracies, don't like those who are made on a larger scale than themselves—another reason for the widespread distrust of both Lloyd George and Churchill. It was the same with Gladstone and Disraeli, or with Chatham: superior abilities made ordinary people feel uncomfortable. Sometimes they are necessary to save a country; then they are dispensed with as rapidly as possible. People feel *safer* with a Baldwin or a Neville Chamberlain: they get what they deserve!

THERE REMAINS the question of Churchill's judgment. Perhaps I may quote what I wrote about this in *The Later Churchills*:

> The very excess of his mental energy has given him a certain obsessive quality: a man of one idea at a time, he has always been apt to be possessed by it to the exclusion of other considerations, particularly personal. It is a characteristic of genius to see things with such intensity that other things cease to exist. Perhaps this gives us some clue to why he has not been good as a party-politician, especially at personal manoeuvres, and reaches full stature with great issues, great arguments and events.

It must be obvious by this time that it is no discommendation in my opinion that Churchill was a poor party-politician. He was a true statesman, which is something better. When he was younger and even into middle age, there was an imbalance about his judgment. But I remember a saying of Lenin to the effect that in politics we must not expect mistakes not to be made; what is more important is to press forward and achieve something.

And, in point of fact, an extraordinary thing about this extraordinary man is that he should have gone on developing all his life so as to overcome his earlier disabilities quite late, and reach maturity as a statesman in his late sixties. When he became Prime Minister a second time in 1951, when Labour still had a majority in the country, economic trends were strongly against his government and it might easily have been toppled over, a member of his Cabinet told me that only the old man's iron will held them together and saw them through. He was then rising seventy-seven.

CHURCHILL was, then, not only a very great man, but also a man of genius—not at all the same thing. We must not omit to notice that in addition to doing it all he also wrote it all—besides his painting, which we should not under-estimate simply because it was Churchill's. Even an eminent historian, such as G. M. Trevelyan, may be content to write one historical masterpiece; Churchill wrote two: *The Life and Times of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough*, and *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. He wrote, besides, his Memoirs of both world-wars, each in six volumes, an admirable autobiography, *My Early Life*, the standard biography of his father, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, a first-class account of the war in the Sudan, *The River War*, several volumes of essays, a novel and a mass of journalism, and all those speeches, many of them little works of art. For he was an artist to his fingertips, in addition to all the rest. He had the rather reckless temperament of a soldier and an artist, weighted by the wisdom of the historian and illuminated by the vision of a statesman who was a prophet. He had no reserve; he was not a bit a cagey politician.

Perhaps that was why the ordinary man took him to his heart in the end, once he got across to him. In that process broadcasting was a great help; for, as Richard Dimbleby noted, breaking all the rules of the game again, Churchill became a brilliant broadcaster.

Mr. Rees' picture of the impact of Churchill's personality is curiously confined to Britain, but in truth he was a world-figure. How to account for that in Mr. Rees' terms? Impossible. Everybody knows the extraordinary position Churchill held in the mind of Americans—and it still goes on, as I can testify, all over the country. This

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isn't because of his insight into war, or any "acceptance of war as the ultimate reality of our time." This is an intellectual's caricature. It was simply because of Churchill's appeal to common humanity—they saw the outsize Gargantuan figure, with all its gusto, its failings, its "antics," its immense enjoyment of all the good things of life, his generosity and ready sympathy, his multifarious response to everything human, they saw it all as themselves writ large. "Look!," said a bombed-out woman on one of his frequent tours of London after an air-raid, "he really does care! He's crying."

And then there's Eleanor Roosevelt's highbrow incomprehension: "how anybody could eat so much, how anybody could drink so much, how anybody could smoke so much and remain in good health passes my understanding." The impact of his personality on all the world is not inexplicable: it was because they saw themselves in him—the kind of life they would all like to have lived, lived to its fullest extent, every moment crammed with fulfilment and enjoying every minute of it.

One can understand them, when one thinks of it all, the range and the span!—the soldiering and fighting, the escape from prison-camp, writing and lecturing and making a fortune out of it, marrying the one beautiful woman he was in love with and "living happy ever after," adoring his mother and worshipping his father's memory; family-life and sport, polo and horses and racing and gambling quite a bit in earlier days; taking to boats, eight months of the year at sea on the Admiralty yacht, *Enchantress*, learning to fly, trying out the tanks; house-parties, picnics, eating and drinking and the best talk in the world, an endless fund of good stories, quips, jokes, a natural wit; knowing everybody, going everywhere, trying on all those hats and garments, disporting himself like a walrus in the sea when he could get a moment off from war-time Britain to visit the Desert Rats in North Africa; very cross indeed when he wasn't allowed, the Prime Minister of Britain, to go in with the troops on D-Day, and the King himself had to stop him. When, as Home Secretary, he was ticked off by his senior civil-servant for barging into the battle of Sidney Street in the East End, he came back with, "*Now*, Charlie, don't be croth. *It was such fun.*"

Perhaps that would serve for the best epigraph for his life and career, and why people's image of him all over the world is such a kindly one, why they took him to heart rather than head. Of course, both Britain and the United States had reason to be grateful to him; and he passed the more rigorous test of a salute from that other great, and very difficult, man, General de Gaulle: "*le grand Churchill.*"

Many of the world's men of genius have had something abnormal in their make-up. Men seem to have recognised in Churchill an all-round normal humanity, only Gargantuan-sized, themselves raised to the nth degree.

The Air of Unity

Letter from India — By JAMES MORRIS

I miss it so—this golden, golden country
That took my youth
And paid for it so princely, of a truth—
I miss it so.

SO MR. HILTON BROWN wrote of India, in the last years of the Raj, and his verses were affectionately shown to me only the other day in the Connemara Library in Madras. Liberal intellectuals would no doubt dismiss his poem as sentimental hypocrisy. Not me, least of all in Kipling's centenary year. I can imagine the immense emotional pull India must exert on a man, after half a lifetime spent among its majestic muddle. I crossed the country by train a week or two ago, from Coromandel to the Arabian Sea, hauled by a crudely painted engine with a silver star on the front and the driver's name on the cab, with *biryani* and *chupattis* ordered by telegraph to await our arrival at unpronounceable junctions, and low-caste employees intermittently appearing out of the *mêlée* to sweep the floor of the compartment: and as we laboured across the interminable Deccan, me with old Murray's *Handbook* on my lap to see where the Additional Clergy Society maintained a mission, whether I ought to order my *tonga* in advance from the station-master, or if it would be necessary to wear close-fitting spectacles or veils, as a protection against particles of stone—as we tumbled on, day and night, through Sholapur and Wadi, Tiripati ("travellers will be pestered by mendi-

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cants") and Gooty ("taken by Hyder Ali in 1776, after a siege of nine months"), through Madras State and Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Maharashtra, so it seemed to me, in a joggled, upper-berth sort of way, that a journey through India really was a journey through the whole range of human experience, scheduled only in some celestial and utterly unobtainable Bradshaw.

Now THIS KIND OF sententious thought, expressed in sentences that long, irritates the Indian intelligentsia as much as it probably does readers of ENCOUNTER anywhere else in the world. I began my visit to India with a few days at the University of Madras, which stands bubbled, pinnacled, and even Queen Victoria'd beside the Indian Ocean, and thought I detected there a positively anti-mystical strain, an almost aggressive devotion to things rational, progressive, and terse. I was longing to ask some unimpeachable savant how those fakirs lay upon those spikes, but I never did summon up the nerve. ("They are only," I feel sure he would have said, "for the tourists.")

Ah well, I thought, among dons you expect nothing less—or more: but since then I've realised that this is not just an academic symptom, but almost a popular mood—a deliberate national movement away from those values we still generally associate with India: asceticism, that is, pacifism, humility, a fakir-like aloofness to the uncomfortable power-politics of the world outside. The recent fracas with Pakistan has apparently jolted the Indians into a new steeliness. In London I had no idea how violently in the right they felt themselves to be in this squabble, whose contestants looked to me, from a few thousand miles away, just about quits for morality. Indians saw the conflict as a straightforward Pakistani aggression, an invasion, which they defeated. They felt cruelly let down by the democratic West (for they no longer consider themselves, it seems, a part of "Afro-Asia"). Nobody sprang to their help, as they felt was their right, and the West inexplicably insisted upon treating both sides on equal terms. "Suddenly we grew up," as one of those Madrasi academics observed to me—by which he meant that suddenly non-alignment kicked back.

This seems to have been excellent for morale. Alone They Stood. I still don't know who really won the battles of the Punjab, though I am sure the Indians did fight very effectively: but if you believe the local Press, the brave *jawans* of the Indian Army never put a bazooka wrong, and left those northern plains smoking with the wrecks of Pakistani tanks and aircraft. Victory is still in the air, several weeks after. Portraits of heroes flash past you at railway stations, cakes in the shape of Patton tanks are cut by chairmen at celebratory functions, recruiting officers get peremptory post-cards from four-year-old boys demanding immediate opportunity for death or glory. My guess is that if you covet instant unpopularity in India today, you have only to say something sneering about the army.

Not that I would want to, for it seems to me almost the last repository of the old military virtues, with its vast sense of scale and comradeship, the variety of its uniforms, languages, traditions, its beards and turbans and waxed whiskers, its jungle green and its terrible *subhadars*. Travelling across India today is like travelling across Russia in a novel, with soldiers always on the move, drinking tea out of their saucers at platform canteens, or feet up on their kit in the most basic of soldierly attitudes: superb swaggering Sikhs, fragile Madrasi gunners, soldiers I take to be Mahrattas with cocked hats and R.A.F. moustaches, immensely elegant officers in hacking-jackets, direct from a distinctly pre-war Sandhurst—all the pride, colour and variety of a multi-racial brotherhood, a daily *durbar* through your window.

IT IS THE AIR of unity that is moving. In fact the Indian army recruits its fighting men overwhelmingly from the war-like north, and it has apparently been a slight embarrassment to the public relations men that so many of their air force heroes have been Eurasians: but Indians like to think that they are all soldiers now, and certainly the unity of the Republic was impressively maintained. "In this shining hour," as a writer in the Northern India *Patrika* put it, "our nation has had a rebirth, it has found a new soul." It was a close thing in places, I am told, but there really were none of the communal riots that were feared, and Muslim troops at the front seem to have fought the Pakistanis as diligently as Hindus (the PROS breathed easier whenever a Mohammedan appeared on the list of decorations). The only Muslim who has complained to me about the war was a driver in Bombay who presently went on to rifle my airline bag when he thought I wasn't looking, thus casting doubts in my mind as to his absolute reliability of judgment.

THE INDIANS, especially those old enough to remember the massacres of 1947, still have recurrent nightmares about their huge Muslim minorities: their existence is the argument one is usually offered against a plebiscite in Kashmir—if Kashmir opted for secession, would it not set a precedent for Muslim communities all over India? A sense of triumphant relief (and surprise, perhaps) therefore pervades

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the Republic now, and raises the many-raced *jawan* to a pinnacle of symbolic esteem.

At first it feels like plain militarism. It is alarming, in India of all countries, to be greeted by such a splurge of heroics—as though the Rajput princes of old, so bloodthirsty and caparisoned, were having the last laugh on Gandhi. But in a sense it is only an aspect of Indian secularity, a concept which dominates the contemporary propaganda of New Delhi. "Secular" is the most popular adjective in the Republic today, except perhaps "gallant." Pakistan, they keep saying, is a double-dyed, reactionary, autocratic theocracy, but India is a *secular* State. Ostensibly, of course, they mean only that the State is religiously neutral, but the phrase has wider connotations. In Pakistan one feels that lofty, rigid, sometimes fanatical principles still govern affairs—principles of mosque and orderly-room, sustained by air vice-marshals and *imams*. In India, it seems to me, the energies that impel the State have become very much more like our own. The old high-falutin' talk of non-violence and spiritual compensation is not often heard. Like most of us, India is mostly concerned, defence apart, with living better: on the rock-bottom level of poverty, with surviving at all; among the growing middle classes, with buying a car, educating the children or keeping up with the pop ("beatle-boys" is a pleasant new Indian generic).

There are still mysteries innumerable on every corner, concerned with all the esoterica of caste, religion, and heritage; but in the cities there is already a very substantial Indian public whose values and aspirations are more or less our own. You meet them everywhere—*blasé* on aeroplanes, air-conditioned on trains, or all too often at foreign consulates, trying to take their skills elsewhere (the Indian brain drain is perhaps the most perturbing of all). They are not just the old Anglicised governing classes, or its sons: they are a new kind of Indian, as near America as England, perfectly detached from the imperial past, yet at least as westernised as any jodphurred Maharaja or Cambridge Brahmin of old. The upper-crust white-collar workers of Bombay, say, are really exceedingly like commuters in Surrey or New Jersey. Indian manners are gentler, certainly, except among those arrogant minor officials who have been infuriating susceptible Englishmen for several generations now (if nemesis ever befalls the State Bank at Lucknow, blame me). Indian television has not yet spluttered into Dr. Kildare. But allow for climate, history, costume, and wealth, and you will realise that in India there is a substantial nation, perhaps a couple of million strong, with whom we actually do share a civilisation. This is the secular State, freed as its members are from all the taboos and superstitions of the past. There is a drive-in bank in Madras; and one of the standard Indian greeting telegram phrases reads: "HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESS IN ELECTIONS."

SOMETIMES it is rather wearing. In particular I myself find it hard to warm to that prime exemplar of Indian modernity, the emancipated Indian woman—so sure, so opinionated, and so often (like her sister-in-arms, the Intourist guide) misinformed. To every bigotry, though, there are exceptions. The other day I walked brazenly into a small white bungalow in the south, intending only to admire its architecture, for it was a particularly comfortable example of Regency Imperial: and there, all alone, in trousers, working brainily on the translation of a novel, I found one of the two or three most delightful women in the world, all-Indian and perfectly secular.

YOU HEAR far more in India about Democracy, as an ideology, than anywhere else I know. This is poignant. It is hardly our kind of democracy here, old hands assure me, so powerful are the pressures of authority: in Kerala it is not a democracy at all, every election result being so awkward for the Government that they have given up trying, and now run the State by Presidential decree. The Press is free indeed, but all too often lick-spittle, and the Defence of India regulations are so absolute that last month a man got a year in jail for listening to Karachi radio.

Yet Indians honestly supposed that when their country was engaged in war against the despotism next door, Britain and America would necessarily be at their side. They are, after all, the only people in mainland Asia to support even in principle the democratic system. They do not appreciate, though, that the cause has long been abandoned, and that the West no longer has friends, enemies, or even apparently interests, but only escalations. They forget, too, in an odd and touching way, how much of their own modern history has been a running disagreement with the Powers of the West—and as a matter of fact, incessantly though we have diverged on great issues of foreign policy since India became independent, still the conflict never does seem quite convincing. India today, to be sure, is full of anti-Western slogans and sentiments, sometimes quite vicious. Britons living in Delhi speak of bitter recriminations among old Indian friends, and in Bengal especially the visiting Anglo-American, as he is fondly categorised out here, is likely to be

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suspected of personal complicity with Ayub Khan, or even Mao himself. ("It is my hobby," replied a jolly Sikh with a shrug, when I asked him why he supposed I had anything to do with the bombing of Ambala Cathedral.)

But even now it remains, in a most extraordinary way, fraternal reproach, and I have experienced no hint of personal hostility. Officially the Indians seem to enjoy their easiest relations, just at the moment, with the Russians, who have supplied no arms to Pakistan, and are enemies of China too. Yet Indians of all kinds, to my astonishment, insist on accusing the West of the most awful miscreancy in tones far more of sorrow than of anger. They Do Not, they seem to say, Expect It Of Us. Beside some blazing poster accusing Mr. Harold Wilson of desperate perfidy, you are still likely to find, impeccably maintained, a statue of some forgotten Viceroy or a monument to the heroes of the Rohilla Wars. Somebody in the library will introduce you to the work of Mr. Hilton Brown, and the current guide to the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta assures us still, in the land of Ajanta and the Taj, that Verestchagin's picture of the State Entry of the Prince of Wales into Jaipur, 1876, is "undoubtedly the finest work of art in Asia." (And on another plane, nothing could be more reassuring to a western art-lover than a critique I noticed the other day of a more recent Indian painting, which was said to display "all the essential qualities of architectural functional elements synthesising the aesthetic movements of the age.")

Give it a month or two, and I bet the most maligned British newspaper correspondent in Delhi is happily back on the party circuit, for unlike Egyptians, Indians seem unable to keep up their recrimination against the West. It is very disconcerting—one does like to be a *whole-hog* villain—and exceedingly difficult to analyse. Perhaps the schoolmasterly authority of the Raj cut too deep after all. Perhaps educated Indians feel too akin to us, however our policies differ. Perhaps, one murmurs diffidently, they actually *like* us. Whatever the reason, I would not like to be a Russian, still less a Chinese, seriously trying to crack this armour of western affinity. Experts are still assuring us, I know, that India may easily topple over into Communism, at least of the Chinese sort. Only the other day somebody very responsible tried to make my flesh creep by assuring me that 40 per cent of Congress was Communist already, and only awaited a majority in the Party to let all hell loose. Yet I find a Communist *coup* in India harder to conceive than ever. It might be engineered from China, of course: but the educated, westernised classes seem to have grown so in the past decade, in size as in sophistication, that for all the economic distress of India, every year seems to entrench them further—and the last thing they want is Communism. Perhaps some fire-eating genius, some topsy-turvy Gandhi, might prise this Republic out of the one political channel and into the other: but by the time that prodigy is born, raised, brain-washed and set at large, probably nobody will much care anyway.

In the meantime, self-reliance is the thing. Every Indian speech is full of it, every political conversation seems to reach the conclusion that India (which is receiving economic aid from almost every source you can think of) must be ready to go it alone. She must grow her own food—"EAT LESS, GROW MORE," say the placards, "AND WASTE FOOD NO MORE." She must make her own tanks, ships, aircraft—even nuclear bombs, according to one vociferous but mercifully unofficial school of thought. She must tighten her belt, do without a meal on Mondays, conserve petrol, plan her families, refuse aid with strings, subscribe to the Gold Fund and patronise local manufacturers.

NOT ALL THAT many people, as it happens, *have* subscribed to the Gold Fund, but citizens often write letters to the papers urging everyone to be more austere, and every now and then somebody reproves the visitor, too, if his instincts veer towards the sybaritic—like the tourist official who looked positively shocked when I asked him how I could arrange a sleeping compartment to myself (but I arranged it anyway, for there were no other applicants—the new Indians prefer, if they can, to fly). *Effort* is the national watchword. I don't know how much of it really implies personal sacrifice, and how much is showmanship, or wishful thinking: but in so amorphous and unregimentable a country, it takes the stranger aback, like a tocsin at a whist drive.

Again, elsewhere it might seem ominous. When countries gird themselves for a national purpose, all too often they have something disagreeable in mind. Now and then, even in India, one hungers for a little more dissent. The immense public displays of gratitude and affection for Mr. Shastri are deeply impressive to watch, and Mr. Shastri himself is the last man, I am sure, to aspire to a one-Party State: but the support he commands is all too often fulsome and uncritical, and any flicker of conversational opposition to his present policies, any shadow of a suggestion that the Pakistanis might have a faintly discernible case on Kashmir, comes as a refreshing relief to the flag-waggery. (In Parliament, of course, the usual

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line of criticism is that flags aren't being waved enough.)

INDIANS tend to be hurt if you talk like this, but then they don't often realise how equivocal is the relationship their Republic has fashioned with the rest of the world—how unreliable their fluctuations of policy have made them seem, how steadily, beginning perhaps with Goa, their reputation for a higher morality has been eroded—how insidiously the idea grows in one's mind that the only constant in their foreign policy is hostility to Pakistan. Yet you cannot keep up the suspicion, or even the criticism, for long, as Mr. Hilton Brown evidently discovered long ago. India is, in a glorious sense of the phrase, only human: the most fallible, disarming, and lovable of the Powers. I don't know what emotions the intelligentsia allows itself these days, now that the satirical urge has worn off, but India has this effect on me: it makes me want to strip myself of all inessentials, wrist-watch or credit card, family ties or publisher's contract, and melt myself passively into these endless, nameless, money-less multitudes.

Of course I never do. I would be very upset to lose my ticket home. But at least for a month or two, India shifts your values and lowers your sights. Walking across the great Howrah Bridge in Calcutta one morning, I came across one of those terrible Indian cameos against which no amount of rational detachment can immunise the traveller. Absolutely motionless upon the pavement there lay a mother and her baby, half-covered with rags. They did not seem to be breathing. They might have died there, in the night. A single small coin lay in their metal begging-bowl, and as I passed I emptied all my change into it.

I paused a few yards further on, and looked surreptitiously back. I had a terrible feeling I was too late. At first there was still no sign of life, not a tremor from the mother, not a whimper from the child: but as I watched an infinitely fragile, desperately emaciated hand crept out from beneath those rags and took the coins—leaving only one, the smallest, still in the bottom of the bowl. In a moment all was motionless once more. They did not stir again. They didn't seem to breathe.

But I went on my way relieved. At least the lady was alive.

International Commentary

The Vietnamese Agony

A Reply to Critics — By RICHARD LOWENTHAL

WHILE the agony of a nation continues in Viet Nam, without visible prospect of an end by either military decision or negotiation, in the columns of ENCOUNTER the subject of "Lowenthal's Errors" has by now been treated (mostly by saddened friends of mine) at greater length than have the errors of President Johnson. In all modesty, I submit that this indicates a defective sense of proportion and entitles me to a reply, even though I cannot possibly hope to deal with all the points raised.

1. Mr. Patrick Honey assures me that, lacking first-hand knowledge of Viet Nam as I do, I have uncritically accepted unfounded opinions on the attitude of its people. His own expert judgment is that a Communist régime would be "repugnant to the overwhelming majority" of the South Vietnamese; that the Vietcong "has never enjoyed a broad basis of popular support" in the South and has secured popular co-operation there "only by the use or threat of force," and that by now "the character of the movement is progressively becoming exclusively Northern." Accordingly, the war to him is "a war of aggression from outside, not a civil war."

My answer is that no expert, however well-travelled and fluent in the Vietnamese language, can convince me of a thesis which is in flagrant contradiction with the generally available evidence of the military action. A guerilla force which, after all the U.S. bombing of recent months, can still assemble assault units in the

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immediate neighbourhood of the American coastal bases, sneak up to them and *achieve surprise* cannot lack popular support. No doubt terror and intimidation is part of the explanation. I am prepared to accept Arnold Beichman's horrifying figures about the extent of Vietcong terrorism; yet Beichman—another first-hand witness—does not suggest "that terror alone accounts for the Vietcong's great victories" and points to the "genuine grievances" that have been "brilliantly exploited by the Vietcong." I agree with Mr. Honey that the share of Northern regulars fighting in the South has increased since the Americans began bombing the North (hardly a point in favour of the bombing policy!); but the bulk of the Vietcong units are still Southerners—and American reports keep insisting on their bravery in the face of growing punishment. This is not the conduct of press-gang recruits.

Let us not romanticise this beastly business. There has been terror and forced recruiting both by the Vietcong and by the South Vietnamese army, and both sides are showing correspondingly heavy desertion rates (as mentioned by Beichman). There is also a substantial core of convinced anti-Communists in the army and a substantial core of convinced Communists and peasant rebels in the Vietcong. To say that this is *not* a civil war *but* a war of aggression, because the Vietcong leaders have been trained in the North and take their orders from there, misses the point—which is precisely that the aggression could be indirect because enough support for a civil war was there—as there is not in Formosa, or in Malaya, or even in South Korea.

As for the relative strength of the Communists and anti-Communists in a people the majority of which must be longing for peace at almost any price, the crucial fact is the continued Communist control of the bulk of the countryside despite massive American support for the Saigon government. In the circumstances, the "enthusiasm" generated, according to Mr. Honey, by the "imaginative programme" being worked out by that government's civilian advisers seems of limited relevance so far—quite apart from the fact that, according to the American press, no such programme has been agreed as yet.

2. My other critics do not share Mr. Honey's favourable opinion of the present allegiance of the "overwhelming majority" of the people of South Viet Nam, but believe that this allegiance may be regained if military victory is won first by the full use of American strength. Professor Griffith reminds me of the reversal in the internal situation of Greece achieved by British intervention in 1944–45. Mr. Sibnarayan Ray argues that the "successful immobilisation of the guerilla forces" is a *precondition* for achieving a "stable and popular government," but assures me that the Vietcong's "morale and organisation may be broken by cutting off supplies from the North and unrelenting air-ground operations." And even Arnold Beichman, the least wishful and most realistic among them, asks rhetorically: "Is there any doubt that America can destroy the Vietcong and its North Vietnamese supply bases?" He, too, believes that if only the U.S. can hold on militarily, they may "learn in time" how to combat Communist "wars of liberation" politically.

But what if the Northern supply bases are no longer decisive? What if the Vietcong are so entrenched in the countryside that they cannot be isolated and destroyed without destroying a large part of the people of South Viet Nam in the process? The comparison with Greece is indeed instructive as the one example of the successful military reversal of the outcome of a civil war that the Communists seemed to have won. But EAM and ELAS, for all their resistance prestige, had infinitely less fighting experience than the Vietnamese Communists. It was not they who had achieved victory over the German army as the Vietminh did over the French, nor had their—and the Greek people's—endurance been tested by nearly 20 years of war when the British forces landed. In Viet Nam, the apparent impossibility of clearing any major region from guerillas and the unintended, but increasingly frequent destruction of innocent villages by bombing suggests the same conclusion—that no decisive military victory over the Vietcong can be achieved short of a policy of largely indiscriminate extermination; and I refuse to believe that this or any other American administration will adopt such a policy. Intervention on the present or even a larger scale that confines itself to fighting identifiable enemies can prevent a Communist military victory. It cannot end the war, nor create a stable basis for the Saigon government.

3. Because I am troubled by the implications of my analysis yet am trying to face them, Mr. Beichmann calls me an honest man. I return the compliment as he is clearly in a similar position on the other side of the dilemma. He is "doubtful of American capacity to deal successfully with a political war against the Communists in a non-Western area"; hence he chooses the hypothetical example of a Communist coup against an unpopular Shah to ask whether I would "let Iran go down the drain," and argues that the United States should use military force in favour of any government

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threatened by the Communists, regardless of that government's popular support. "What," he asks, "has a government's popularity to do with whether we ought to help its *people* resist Communist subversion or invasion?" But does it not matter whether the people *want* to be helped in this way?

Here, I believe, we reach the core and centre of our debate, and it involves the very nature of our conflict with the Communist powers. For Professor Griffith that conflict is like a world war. Once you are involved in it, your national survival is at stake; and in a war you fight to deny strategic territory to the enemy regardless of the wishes of its inhabitants (as the Americans sought to deny Indochina to Japan regardless of anti-French feeling there). The House of Representatives recently applied the same reasoning in proclaiming the right of the United States to intervene against any attempt to set up a Communist government in the Western hemisphere, thus providing *ex post* justification for President Johnson's "mistake" in San Domingo. Beichman even claims the example of President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis for this outlook. Faced with Khrushchev's missiles, he says, Kennedy "did what comes naturally to an industrial-military power: he threatened to use that power and didn't bother to set up a 'cohesively organised and popularly based political force' in Cuba."

At this point the fallacy becomes tangible. Cuba became a threat to the security of the United States when the missiles were implanted there; and because there was such a threat, the use of American power to remove it was justified and necessary. But once the missiles were removed, the Communist régime in Cuba was no longer a "clear and present danger" to American security, only a potential one; and a potential danger did not justify, in President Kennedy's eyes, the use of actual military action. Conflict with Cuba, as with other Communist régimes, has continued since; but *pace* Professor Griffith, that conflict is now different from "real" war, because national survival is no longer at stake in it.

THE CONFUSION ARISES from the intermingling of power politics and ideological passions that constitutes the essence of the Cold War. The Soviet Union and China are both, on different levels, Great Powers, and both, in different degrees, are ideologically hostile to the West. But while Communist ideology is both a major motivation and one of the weapons of their hostility, it is not that ideology as such that threatens the survival of the advanced Western countries. A threat to our security arises only if a hostile Great Power either gets hold of a place that is of vital importance in itself (by its strategic position or indispensable resources), or if it scores a political success of a kind that would indirectly but crucially change the world balance of power (*e.g.* by causing the disintegration of the Western alliance.) To forestall either kind of hazard has long been the major task of Western—and, above all, American—military power and diplomacy, as last exemplified in preventing the Soviets' military implantation in Cuba and their attempted political breakthrough at Berlin.

But the world-wide ideological conflict is not confined to such life-and-death issues, and outside such crises it is primarily a contest for the minds of men. To prevent the expansion of Communist totalitarian régimes in countries where Western security and the balance of world power are not directly involved is also a *legitimate* Western concern, particularly where the Communists operate by organised terrorism and civil war. But it is not a *vital* Western concern, to be pursued regardless of cost and of the attitude of the people whose future is at stake. The United States quite rightly did not desire the Castro régime to turn Communist; but since they failed to prevent that, they have found that they can live with a Communist Cuba which is not an outpost of Soviet military power—just as they have lived with a Communist North Viet Nam since 1954, and just as they could live with a Communist South Viet Nam, particularly if the latter ceased to be dependent on Chinese military power.

So far, then, from having become a belated convert to the Anglo-French policy of non-intervention in the Spanish civil war, as Mr. Griffith pretends to fear, I regard both world-wide political, ideological, and economic competition against Communist influence and military aid to nations threatened by Communist force as a necessary part of Western policy. I even hold that American intervention in South Viet Nam was reasonable so long as there was a chance of political success. My crucial difference with my critics is that I stick to the view that where vital security issues are not involved, the decisive stake of the contest is not the control of territory, but the allegiance of a people. That is why in such cases Western intervention makes no sense unless it takes place in support of a "cohesive political force."

NOR DO I SHARE Beichman's pessimistic view that Americans are generally unable to match the Communist powers in political warfare in non-Western areas. Since the rise of Communist China, Viet Nam and Cuba have been the only countries to come under Communist control, despite the considerable expenditure of

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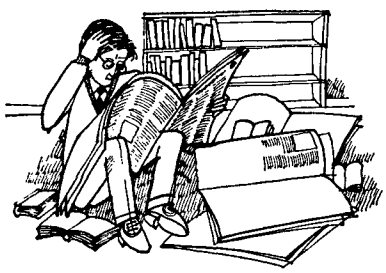
both Russian and Chinese efforts on the conversion of the Third World. These efforts have on the whole been frustrated neither by Western military action (which proved necessary only in Korea and Malaya), nor by the attractions of Western democracy and liberal economics (which are often inapplicable in underdeveloped countries) but by the growth of a great variety of indigenous nationalist and even national-revolutionary régimes and by increasing Western, including American, flexibility and realism in supporting such régimes despite their different political and economic institutions and their anti-imperialist declarations. To co-operate with such indigenous forces of national mobilisation and modernisation is the only form of "matching" Communist political warfare open to the West in the Third World, and the West has learnt it remarkably fast. Nor can American inexperience be blamed for the unfortunate fact that in some countries, including Viet Nam, such forces do not exist. But where their absence has given a native Communist movement a decisive advantage, it seems to me a wiser course, in the present age of Communist pluralism, to encourage its independence from the Communist Great Powers by coming to terms with it than to cement its dependence on them by trying to bomb it out of existence.

4. Mr. Beichman quotes from my article that the U.S. cannot now simply withdraw and abandon its South Vietnamese allies without catastrophic international effect. That is precisely why I did not—and do not—advocate unilateral withdrawal. I advocate holding on pending a negotiated agreement for the withdrawal of all foreign troops followed by South Vietnamese self-determination, with both the Saigon government and the Vietcong taking part in the negotiation. But I did say that the most probable outcome of such self-determination would still be a delayed Communist takeover, and that even if negotiation and delay were used to ensure the safety of those Vietnamese who had actively fought the Communists, the political defeat thus suffered by the U.S. might well spell the end of SEATO and of the American military presence in South-east Asia. My critics think that this would be catastrophic enough. Mr. Ray believes that it would demoralise all the governments in the region and "be the signal for Communist uprisings which Mao's China has been planning for over a decade." Mr. Beichman, while taking note of my arguments against this "push-button theory," points out that since the failure of the 1948–50 series of risings China has become much stronger while the South-east Asian governments



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have not. Once in control of that region, Mr. Ray adds, China would become "an even greater threat" to American security than Japan proved to be in the last war. Hence the world balance of power would be "radically altered."

I remain unconvinced that a neutral Thailand, or even Malaysia in present circumstances, could be turned into another Viet Nam by a decision in Peking to start guerilla warfare there, or that China in her present stage of development would try to conquer these states by open invasion at the risk of bringing back the American alliance. I would remind my critics that I did *not* advocate U.S. withdrawal from Korea, Japan, the Philippines, or the Formosa straits. But I admit that these matters are in their nature conjectural and difficult to prove conclusively. What is not difficult to show is that the relative weight of Chinese power today, because of the radically different level of industrial-military development, is in no way comparable with the relative weight of Japanese power in 1941, and would not be decisively increased by the addition of further millions of "underdeveloped" humanity. Mr. Honey has succumbed to a popular fallacy in stating that "the period of maximum Soviet aggressiveness coincided with that of its industrialisation." During the critical phase of industrialisation, Stalin combined maximum internal cruelty and maximum verbal militancy with great international caution—just as China does now.

It is instructive to re-read Mr. Ray's frightening description of the "phenomenal growth of Chinese influence and prestige in Asia" in the light of the events of the last few weeks—the turn of the tide in Indonesia, the withdrawn ultimatum to India, the failure to fulfil the hopes of leadership among the Afro-Asian states, as well as the growing signs of North Vietnamese and even North Korean detachment from China's international line. Of course, it may be argued that part of this setback is due to China's inability to react by more than words to the American bombing of North Viet Nam. But the mere warnings of the consequences of a serious attack on India were at least as important, and the American capacity to deter open Chinese aggression depends on the American presence off China's shores rather than on the South-east Asian mainland. The point is that China could be shown up as a "paper tiger" because at her present stage of development, she is still inferior by a decisive margin to the two world powers, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.

5. Mr. Beichman is quite right that I am a "Europe Firster"—but not because I think that "Asia and Africa matter little" and that "only what lies between the Urals and San Francisco has geo-political significance." This is not a question of preferences, but of power potentials —and those are subject to change. China *may* become a true world power if—I say if, not when—she solves her tremendous problem of industrialisation. Russia *may* become less of a danger to Western interests, if internal long-term changes continue and the legacy of conflict and tension along the European partition line can be liquidated. If these things happen, China will become the principal danger to the non-Communist world, and I shall be quite ready to become an "Asia Firster." As of now, China shouts more raucously, but Russia represents more power and competes for more vital areas.

Mr. Griffith, however, denies the necessity for choice. He protests that American strength and stamina are fully adequate to dealing with both theatres at once. He claims that Moscow, so far from profiting in Europe by America's Vietnamese preoccupation, is finding her prestige impaired equally with China's by her inability to prevent the bombing of a Communist state. With Mr. Beichman, he argues that both the European and the Asian allies of the United States feel encouraged by the vigour of American military action, and would be discouraged by a negotiated withdrawal leading to a Communist political success.

In my article, I granted that the economic and military resources of the United States might suffice for the dual task, but doubted the adequacy of their "psychological and mental resources" (not "psychological and moral," as Griffith misquotes). What I had in mind is the virtual absence of any European policy of the U.S. since President Johnson's arrival, and its cumulative effects. If Washington had shown more persistence both in pursuing constructive initiatives with the Soviets and in maintaining pressures on them, neither the destructive efforts of President de Gaulle nor their exploitation by Moscow could have developed to the present point. The Soviet position in Eastern Europe, so far from being "steadily eroded" as Mr. Ray claims, has been far more strengthened of late by American passivity and French connivance than it has been weakened by East European worries about Viet Nam. The direct effect of American policy in Viet Nam on West European morale now seems to me neither as harmful as I feared before my own recent return from the U.S., nor as positive as Griffith claims. Apart from the committed ideologists of the crusading Right and the anti-American Left, I have met doubt and detachment rather than convinced approval or disapproval. As for Beichman's assurance that privately no one is complaining in Asia, he ought to pass it on to the State Department which is increasingly worried about the rising

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tide of criticism in Japan, America's most important ally in Asia; it is criticism chiefly directed against the bombing of North Viet Nam.

6. Messrs. Beichman and Griffith are quite right to point out that the American commitment to the military containment of China is not new. Nor do I think this is wrong in itself, and I apologise to readers for using, in the beginning of my article, a formula that conveyed that impression. What I believe to be both new and wrong, as I made clear later in the text, is the long-term commitment to an American military *presence* on the South-east Asian mainland where it is in present conditions militarily unnecessary for the purpose and politically harmful. Next to the Chinese pressure on the Vietnamese Communists to continue the war regardless of cost, this American commitment to a military presence in South-east Asia is the chief obstacle to any attempt to end the war by negotiation; for so long as the administration maintains it, its declarations of willingness to negotiate on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreement, however welcome in themselves, will be met with doubt (and would be so met even without the recent evidence of the rejection of Hanoi's peace-feelers in August 1964).

That doubt about the objectives of American policy is not confined to America's enemies and critical friends, but is at the root of the increasing polarisation of American domestic opinion on the war. Of course, Beichman and Griffith are right that many good American democrats share their views, and that in any free country a fringe of well-meaning pacifists can always be found to oppose a policy of resistance to aggression, however justified. But as I pointed out, the critical minority in the U.S. now goes much beyond this usual fringe; and the same political ambiguities which have swelled its ranks are also producing a rising chorus of right-wing criticism calling for further escalation (*e.g.* the bombing of Hanoi and the centres of North Vietnamese industry, if not of China). This is inevitable because the administration is advancing two incompatible justifications for its actions: the aim of military victory, which cannot be achieved by the present policy, or indeed by any other short of indiscriminate mass extermination: and the aim of a negotiated solution based on the Geneva agreement, which indeed might be achieved on the basis of a military stalemate, but implies acceptance of the risk of political defeat in Viet Nam and renunciation of the American military presence in the region. So long as the administration lacks the political courage to prepare the public for the latter alternative, the rise of extremism both on the "Left" and the "Right," the burning of draft-cards and the "bomb-the-lot" demonstrations, will continue at an increasing rate, with both Communists and Birchers gaining a new respectability, or at least influence, at the expense of a true national consensus.

To CONCLUDE on the question of policy: a decision to stop the bombing of North Viet Nam is the major contribution Washington could long have made towards strengthening the faction in Hanoi that favours negotiation; and as a result of recent Sino-Soviet polemics, we know that both Moscow and Paris have made the administration aware of that months ago. But the more the North Vietnamese share in the war escalates in turn and the more Americans are killed by North Vietnamese regulars, the harder such a step will become for Washington. Moreover, the President could only justify a decision to stop bombing the North if he told the American people clearly why "military victory" in Viet Nam is a chimera, and if he prepared them frankly for the political setback which a return to the 1954 Geneva agreement would imply. It would seem that his reluctance to do that has been all along the main obstacle preventing effective steps towards ending the war.

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The Last of the Aryans

By V. S. Naipaul

YOU DON'T have to wait long for the characteristic Nirad Chaudhuri note in *The Continent of Circe*.[1] It occurs, unmistakably, almost before the book begins; yet it has the effect of a climax. There is a frontispiece with two views from the author's verandah in Delhi: one looking up to clouds, one looking down to refugee tents. The title page has a Latin device: *De rerum indicarum natura: Exempla gentium et seditionum*. The motto—"Know Thyself"—follows, in five Indo-European languages. Seven detailed contents pages come next. And then we come to text: six pages, a chapter almost, headed "In Gratitude." Chaudhuri begins by thanking Khushwant Singh, "the well-known Sikh writer, good companion, and man-about-town, for the loan of his portable typewriter." This seems straightforward enough; but it soon becomes clear that we have to do with an incident.

It is like this. Chaudhuri is tapping away on Khushwant's machine. He is nearing the end of one of the sections of his book and his gratitude to Khushwant, as he says, is at its highest. A "public print" comes his way. It is "the official publication of the American Women's Club of Delhi." It contains *An Interview with Khushwant Singh*:

> INTERVIEWER: Who is the best Indian writer today?
>
> KHUSHWANT SINGH: In non-fiction? Without a doubt Nirad Chaudhuri.....A bitter man, a poor man. He doesn't even own a typewriter. He borrows mine a week at a time.

Chaudhuri is "struck all of a heap":

> My poverty is, of course, well known in New Delhi and much further afield, and therefore I was not prepared to see it bruited about by so august a body as the American Women's Club of Delhi.

Khushwant explains. His statement has been given the wrong emphasis. He thought he was only entertaining a lady to tea; he had no idea what her real intention was. He offers Chaudhuri a brand-new portable typewriter as a gift:

> I tried to show that I bore no grudge by again borrowing the machine after the publication of the article and by most gratefully accepting the present of the new typewriter.

And a footnote adds:

> Having read Pascal early in life I have always tried to profit by his wisdom: "*Si tous les hommes savaient ce qu'ils disaient les uns des autres, il n'y aurait pas quatre amis dans le monde.*"

So much about the typewriters on which the book was written; the Americans, though, continue to receive attention for a whole page.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to take an interest in Nirad Chaudhuri's work without becoming involved with his situation and "personality." This has been his extra-literary creation since the publication in 1951 of his *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The book made him known. But in India it also made him disliked. Cruelly, it did not lessen his poverty; this mighty work, which in a fairer world would have made its author's fortune and seen him through old age, is now out of print. So, persecuted where not neglected, as he with some reason feels, he sits in Delhi, massively disapproving, more touchy than before, more out of touch with his fellows, never ceasing to attract either the slights of the high or the disagreeable attentions of the low.

His fellow passengers on the Delhi buses wish to know the time. Without inquiry they lift his wrist, consult his wrist-watch, and then without acknowledgment let his wrist drop. Sometimes he walks; and, in a land of "massive staticity," where when men walk it is as if "rooted trees were waving in the wind," he walks "in the European manner, that is to say,

[1] *The Continent of Circe*. By NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI. Chatto & Windus, 35s.

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quickly and with a sense of the goal towards which I am going." Elderly people shout after him, "Left! Right! Left! Right!" Boys call out, "Johnnie Walker!" Sometimes they come right up to him and jeer in Hindi: *"Aré Jahny."* It is not even the Johnnie Walker of the whisky label they refer to, but "a caricature of him by an Indian film star":

> Friends ask me why I do not go for these impertinent young fellows. I reply that I retain my common sense at least to the point of forcing myself to bear all this philosophically. But being also a naturally irascible man, I sometimes breathe a wish that I possessed a flame-thrower and was free to use it. In my conduct and behaviour, however, I never betray this lack of charity.

Indoors it is hardly less dangerous. The London Philharmonic Orchestra comes to Delhi. Chaudhuri talks music to Sir Malcolm Sargent; an English lady whispers to Mrs. Chaudhuri, "What a bold man he is!" He goes to the concert the next day; the British Council has provided tickets. He finds that he is separated from his wife by the aisle. An upper-class Indian lady claims that he is sitting on her chair. She is wrong; she objects then to his proximity; she calls the upper-class usherettes to her aid. He yields; he takes his chair across the aisle to join his wife.

The extra-literary Chaudhuri "personality" is more than a creation of art; the suffering, however self-induced, is too real. Nearly seventy, he is a solitary, in hurtful conflict at every level with his environment.

FAILURE: it is Chaudhuri's obsession. There is the personal failure: twenty years of poverty and humiliation dismissed in a single, moving sentence in the *Autobiography*. There is the failure as a scholar, recorded in the *Autobiography* and echoed in the present book.

> I shall mention the names of four men whom I regard as truly learned. They are Mommsen, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Harnack, and Eduard Meyer. When young and immature I cherished the ambition of being the fifth in that series. So I could not have been very modest. But a standard is a standard.

There is the failure, or rather the futility, of the 19th-century Anglo-Bengali culture, Chaudhuri's own, set against the larger futility of British rule. These were the interwoven themes of the monumental *Autobiography*. Now Chaudhuri addresses himself to a more encompassing failure: the failure of his country, his race, and the land itself, *Aryavarta*, the land of the Aryans.

He has called *The Continent of Circe* an "Essay on the Peoples of India." But his subject is really the Hindus; and his starting-point is the incomprehension, rapidly giving way to rage, which the Hindus have immemorially aroused in non-Hindus. Even E. M. Forster, Chaudhuri says, is more drawn to Muslims; and for all his pro-Indian sentiment, "there are few delineations of the Indian character more insultingly condescending" than those in *A Passage to India*. Forster's plea for Indo-British friendship reminds Chaudhuri of the poem:

> *Turn, turn thy hasty foot aside,*
> *Nor crush that helpless worm!*
> *The frame thy wayward looks deride*
> *Required a God to form*

"This massive, spontaneous, and uniform criticism by live minds... cannot be cancelled by afterthoughts which have their source in the *Untergang des Abendlandes*." And Chaudhuri wishes to cancel nothing. He seeks only to explain. But the act of explaining frequently drives *him* to rage. Where the *Autobiography* was analytic, detached and underplayed, the Essay is strident and tendentious. Chaudhuri's sense of failure and vulnerability, that personality, comes in the way; and it is as a display of personality that *The Continent of Circe* is best to be relished. It is at its most delicious when it is most passionate; and it is most passionate when, one suspects, it is most personal: in the account, for instance, of the "sob-chamber" of Hindu family life, where the only competition is in gloom and people can legitimately consider themselves provoked if they are told they are looking well. So, in Chaudhuri's essay as much as in the work of any uncomprehending foreigner, "Hindu" ends by being almost a word of abuse.

Hindus pacifist? Rubbish, says Chaudhuri. Hindus are militarist, have always been; it is only their inefficiency that makes them less of a menace to the world. To prove this he gives selective historical examples and interprets the frontier conflict with China in a way that will not be faulted in Peking. Again: "The industrial revolution in India at its most disinterested is an expression of anti-European and anti-Western nationalism." This is possible; but it cannot be squared with what immediately follows: "A far stronger force, in actual fact the positive force, is the Hindu's insatiable greed for money." This, at first, seems too meaningless a statement even for simple denial. But he is making an important point; he is speaking of what some people in India call the "pigmy mentality" of the Indian capitalist:

> The American industrialist is the old European Conquistador in a new incarnation.... But the Hindu money-maker can never be anything but his *paisa*-counting sordid self.... His spirit is

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best symbolised by the adulteration of food, medicine, and whatever else can be adulterated.

So that the Indian industrial revolution, so far from being an expression of anti-Western nationalism, turns out to be a very petty, private thing indeed. Its cynicism might appear to some to be an extension of caste attitudes. And it might be expected that Chaudhuri would be critical of caste. Not at all. He asks us to keep off the caste question if we don't want to pound India to dust. Caste is the only thing that holds Indian society together. It is "a natural compensation for man's convergent zoological evolution and divergent psychological evolution." Caste did not suppress mobility; that came only with the Pax Britannica. And the Chaudhuri flourish is added:

> If the system suppressed anything it was only ambition unrelated to ability, and watching the mischief from this kind of ambition in India today I would say that we could do with a little more of the caste system in order to put worthless adventurers in their place.

It might seem then that Chaudhuri, in an attempt to make a whole of Hindu attitudes, has succumbed to any number of Hindu contradictions. But I also feel that Chaudhuri, living in Delhi, enduring slights and persecution, has at last succumbed to what we might call the enemy. He sees India as too big; he has lost his gift of detachment, his world view. He seeks to expose where exposure is not really necessary. He has been taken in by the glitter of "the diplomatic" at Delhi, the flurry of visitors, the cultural displays of competing governments. He exaggerates the importance of India and the interest taken in India. People in England, he says, "are still longing after [India] with the docility of cattle," and the words make sad reading in London in 1965.

But this is the theme of his polemic: that tropical India is the continent of Circe, drugging and destroying those whom it attracts, and that the Aryans, now Hindus, were the first to be lured from a temperate land, "denatured" and destroyed. Their philosophy is the philosophy of the devitalised. It is rooted in secular distress, the anguish of flesh on the Gangetic Plain, where everything quickly decomposes and leads to *tamas*, a comprehensive squalor:

> The tragedy of all the systems of Hindu philosophy is that they confront man with only one choice: remain corruptible and corrupt flesh, or become incorruptible and incorrupt stone.

Be neurotically fussy about cleanliness; or—the greater spirituality—show your indifference to the extent of being able to eat excrement.

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Hindus are not philosophers; nor do they reverence philosophy. "What we respect are the Sadhus, possessors of occult power."

In Chaudhuri's argument it follows without contradiction that a people obsessed with religion, really a "philosophy of sorrow," are obsessed with sex. It is the great anodyne. "Defeat was on the fleshly plane.... Rehabilitation must also be in the flesh." The sex act in Hindu sculpture is not symbolic of any sort of spiritual union, as is sometimes said: it is no more than what it appears to be. With a loss of vitality this celebration of the senses declines into the "sex-obsessed chastity of the Hindu, which is perhaps the most despicable ethical notion ever created in the moral evolution of any people":

> Their admiration of the supposed superior sexual knowledge and dexterity of the Hindus is putting ideas in the heads of a particularly depraved set of Occidentals, who are coming to India and working havoc with what sexual sanity... we still have.

Well said; but it is on the subject of sex that Chaudhuri becomes most fanciful. Tracing the decline of vitality, he makes too much, one feels, of the emphasis in Sanskrit erotic writings on the pleasures of the *purushayita* or reversed position. Wasn't it in such a position, if one reads right, that Lucius and Fotis first came together in *The Golden Ass*?

Chaudhuri writes of India as though India has never been written about before. He pays little attention to received ideas; he mentions no authorities:

> I am old, and I cannot spend the few years that are left to me tilting at theories which I have taken a lifetime to outgrow.... I must therefore be resigned to being called a fool by those who believe in ghosts.... Historical conferences in India always remind me of séances.

He places the Aryan settlement of the Gangetic Plain in the 7th century B.C. This will be offensive to those Indians who think of India as the Aryan heartland and, playing with millennia, like to think of Rome as a recent, and peripheral, disturbance. He allows no civilisation worth the name to the indigenous Australoids, whom he calls the Darks. Rigid barriers were set up against them, and Chaudhuri—going back on some of his old views—claims that no significant intermingling of the races took place. The Darks, in their free or servile state, remain to this day genetically stable; and to this day, it might be added, the burning of a giant effigy of a Dark is the climax of an annual Hindu pageant-play. Hindu *apartheid* quickly gave the Darks the psychology of a subject-race. Chaudhuri re-tells a story from the *Ramayana*, the Hindu epic. It is reported one day to Rama, the Aryan hero, that the son of a Brahmin has died suddenly. There can be only one explanation: an act of impiety. Rama goes out to have a look and, sure enough, finds that a young Dark has been performing Aryan religious rites. The Dark is at once decapitated and the Brahmin's son comes back to life. In later versions of the story the Dark dies happily: death at the hands of an Aryan is a sure way to heaven. Not even slavery created so complete a subjection.

So that, as Chaudhuri tells it, the continent of Circe has played a cruel joke on the Hindus. The first white people to come into contact with a black race, and the first and most persistent practitioners of *apartheid*, they have themselves, over the centuries, under a punishing sun, grown dark. The snow-capped Himalayas have become objects of pilgrimage; and some Hindus, in their hysteria, look beyond that to the North Pole, of which modern map-makers have made them aware. There, someone will tell you in all the blaze of Madras, there at the North Pole lies the true home of the Hindus:

> The theme of paradise lost and regained is one of the major stories of Hindu mythology, and it must date from the Iranian sojourn of the Indian Aryans. In the stories the gods recover their heaven.... But in history paradise is lost for ever; and the curse begins to work: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

THIS IS THE TRUE Chaudhuri mood; and, for all Chaudhuri's fanciful flights and parenthetic rages, it must be respected: the Hindu sense of exile and loss is real. Yet the layman must ask certain questions. Chaudhuri places the Aryan settlement just two or three generations before the birth of the Buddha. Could the philosophy of sorrow and the devitalisation of the Aryan have occurred so soon? Could the Aryan, even the settler in the South, have undertaken the colonisation of South-east Asia a thousand years later? The reader of Chaudhuri's book, working from Chaudhuri's clues, might easily come to a different conclusion from Chaudhuri. He might feel that the Hindus, so far from being denatured Aryans, have continued, in their curious and self-willed isolation, to be close to their elemental Aryan origins. For the Aryan in India, Chaudhuri says, both sensibility and effort became parts of piety; and this surely makes many Hindu attitudes less mysterious. The attitudes remain; the gloss varies with historical circumstance. Chaudhuri writes with some sharpness of Hindus who now use European rationalism to excuse their "irrational urges and taboos." Yet we have seen how he himself uses a borrowed language to defend caste, a primitive institution. Hindus can be

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found today to defend Gandhi's assassination on the grounds that the assassin was a Brahmin. This is outrageous; but it becomes intelligible and logical if we see it as an extension of the old Aryan approval of Rama's slaying of the impious, and complaisant, Dark in the *Ramayana* story.

And there is the erotic sculpture. It cannot be ignored. It cannot be talked away. It is too widespread, too casual. It is of a piece with the open sensuality of the *Rig Veda*, the earliest Hindu sacred book. This has been called the first recorded speech of Aryan man. Chaudhuri translates a sample:

> *He achieves not—he whose penis hangs limp between his thighs;*
> *Achieves he alone whose hairy thing swells up when he lies.*

It is Indrani, the Queen Goddess, who speaks; and she is a match for her consort who, for his lechery, was punished by the appearance all over his body of a thousand *pudenda muliebria*. This is a camp-fire, peasant lewdness. And when all is said and done this is what *aryan* means: he is one who tills the soil.

Chaudhuri's plea that Hindus should turn their backs on Asia and recover their Aryan or European personality is, if narrowly interpreted, meaningless. Part of the trouble is that Chaudhuri makes "Aryan" and "European" interchangeable. But "European" surely needs to be more closely defined, and dated. It is a developing concept; "Aryan" is fixed. And Chaudhuri's plea becomes very thin indeed when we find that for *homo europaeus* in his present predominant and proliferating variety Chaudhuri has no high regard:

> The most vapid and insignificant class of human beings which so far has been evolved in history [is] the modern urban lower middle-class of the West.

The absurd thing is that in India Aryan racial pride still has point; in Europe it has little. Of this pride Chaudhuri's book might be seen as the latest expression. He is not European; with his poetic feeling for rivers and cattle, his insistence on caste, he remains Aryan.

> Make a European society with India's religion. Become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture, and instincts.

This is not Chaudhuri. It is Vivekananda, the Vedantist, writing at the turn of the century. A Bengali, like Chaudhuri, a reformer, a product of the Anglo-Bengali culture; and the message, with all its imprecisions and contradictions, is like Chaudhuri's. The Anglo-Bengali culture survives. To its passionate introspection *The Continent of Circe* is a late addition, quirky, at times wild, but rich and always stimulating.

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TAKE A nice English boy of the upper-middle-classes, country-bred, handsome, intelligent, good at games. Educate him at expensive and enlightened schools; send him into a smart but friendly regiment where he will just miss the war but get a spell of service in the Middle East; let him knock around Europe as a student for a year or so; marry him off to a childhood friend; and make him in his early thirties the leading foreign correspondent of a highbrow Sunday paper. Could one have a better recipe for an enviably happy life? Evidently one could; for John Gale, whose career I have just summarised, ended up in the nut-house before he was forty.

Obviously, one must not read too much into this case-history. Other glorious mornings have turned out just as disastrously, while other horses from the same stable have cantered equably home to jobs in the City, seats in the Commons, eminence in the professions, and all the other pleasant niches for which the bourgeoisie grooms its young. The causes of Mr. Gale's collapse may lie too deep within him to be plumbed by any psychiatrist or exposed even in so therapeutically thorough a self-examination as this autobiography. Alternatively there may be some quite simple explanation: the sense of failure of a man who in his youth had the world at his feet; the shock of the atrocities he witnessed in Algiers and the persecution which his witness brought upon him in Paris afterwards; and what is one to make of the Hardy-esque self-portrait of a tiny boy sitting on his bed wearing a rough blue jersey and thinking "If life is such an effort now, how can I live long?"

It is probably unnecessary and impertinent to probe more deeply than Mr. Gale has himself, and the critic should do no more than commend the vivid directness of his descriptions, the frankness of his self-analysis, and the sharp impact made by the work as a whole. But I have been too close to Mr. Gale's world to leave it at

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that. I was bred in much the same privileged establishments. At Abinger Hill, the extraordinary preparatory school which we both attended, run by energetic young men who treated us as if we were intelligent but eccentric adults, I remember John Gale as a minute child with a mop of fair hair, an enchanting smile, and a maddeningly effortless excellence at games. After this exuberant forcing house, a public school, even Roxburgh's Stowe, seemed remarkably drab. Gale was less fortunate than most: he got nothing out of Stowe at all, not even the warmth of a romantic friendship. Like the rest of us he emerged sexually virgin and frightened, and like most of us remained so until his twenties. That, for one thing, was not a terribly good start. Then there was the army, the harsh but oddly exhilarating experience of learning to be an officer in the Brigade of Guards. Like Abinger Hill, the Brigade was probably the most civilised way of getting through a period of life which most of our contemporaries found disagreeable and depressing. Adolescence could, in that tolerant company, be indefinitely prolonged. But war ends, citizen-soldiers are bid a friendly but firm good-bye. Then what happens?

For most, of course, another womb opens: a profession, a career, a home to build, a family to rear. But surely only the most fortunate, or the most insensitive, of our generation can have remained unconscious of the total inadequacy of our upbringing to the world in which we were now required to take our places? There was the girl problem, outlined above. Worse, there was the class problem, and here the Brigade did us no good at all. Not only was it difficult to develop an adult relationship with the opposite sex; it was almost impossible to do so, except on a totally bogus basis, with someone from another class. Finally, unless one was fortunate enough to have been able to decide one's profession at the age of sixteen and emerge with some qualifications as a doctor, scientist, engineer or historian, what on earth did one *know*? We threshed around in our twenties, supported by kind but worried parents, jobless or soldiering on in jobs we hated and did badly, and woke one morning in panic: we were *twenty-seven*, with nothing to show for it. What would become of us?

At the same time, if we were unlucky, we became aware of other problems. Up till now the thick cocoon of personal relationships which protects the normally gregarious young had filled the foreground of our lives. Love affairs, gossip about other people's love affairs, the happy trivia of multiple friendships, all this, with luck, occupied our waking hours. But

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gradually the group dispersed; married, travelled, even, astonishingly, died. We were left on our own. Some of us increasingly peered inward on ourselves, which is seldom an agreeable occupation; others looked outward with new interest on the society of which we formed part—and often that is not much fun either. Here of course may lie salvation; a new vocation may appear, of a totally unexpected kind. But it can be like peering, for the first time, through a porthole on a liner whose stability and seaworthiness one has always taken for granted and realising that it is, in fact, adrift on a huge, icy and menacing sea. Ten years earlier, aged eighteen, we had been aware of Issues, and reacted to them with rage and enthusiasm. Now both rage and enthusiasm had died. In their place there came the first stirrings of dread.

What did John Gale see through his porthole? He saw Suez, from the receiving end in Egypt; and for him, as for most of us, this brought the collapse of a belief so profound that we hardly knew it was there: that our own country might often be misled and usually be incompetent in the conduct of her affairs, but that she left conspiracy, lying, and open aggression to Lesser Breeds without the Law. Had Gale been in England he might have found it still worse: at least he was spared the experience of seeing the bulk of his countrymen happily endorsing the Prime Minister's fantasy that this was a re-enactment of our Finest Hour. So much for the standards which we public-school men had been taught to accept and expect. That was only the beginning. Gale went on to Algiers, to see the normal face of a placid twentieth-century city erupt in massacre and destruction. A cool head amid massacre and destruction is one of the characteristics which public schools are supposed to breed: but we were never taught that our own people might do the massacring—that gangs of white men—and women—could hunt down and tear to pieces terrified and innocent Moslems; or that the horrors which, when inflicted by Germans, seemed part of an alien evil which Clean Young Englishmen could root out in a splendid crusade, were in fact only one symptom of a malignant cancer which could live on, only temporarily quiescent, in our own veins. And finally there was America: not a country to visit when on the verge of a nervous collapse. Even to the robust, Los Angeles can seem nightmarish enough. America sent John Gale clean round the bend.

THIRTY YEARS AGO there would have been a nice, ready-made solution. This evidence of the corruption of bourgeois society would lead one—as it led many public-school men in their time—to embrace Communism, with its brisk analysis of the world's ills and plausible promises of remedy. Now that bolt-hole was closed, except to a tiny minority with a genius for self-deception. Imperfect as our own society might be, those drab, arrogant and incompetent bureaucracies were patently even worse. What else—emigration? Certainly not to a witch-hunting America; as for the Old Dominions, if they had escaped many of the problems of our crowded and worried society, they had sacrificed too much of its interest and excitement. So there was nothing for it but to come to terms with one's surroundings and, belatedly and painfully, grow up. No longer the country house but the suburban cottage under the hideous sodium street lights. No longer the elegant boarding schools for our young, but sensible day-schools where they will be no more unhappy, no worse educated, and where, if they are intelligent, they can have just as much fun. Mr. Gale is bringing up his children in a different world; but it need not necessarily be a worse one.

Michael Howard

Mr. Lippmann

Conversations With Walter Lippmann. *Little, Brown*, $4.95.

IT IS DIFFICULT to decide whether Mr. Lippmann is a fifth estate of the American republic or is the fourth (with press and TV behind) or is *sui generis*. There is, in support of the last theory, Mr. Lippmann's personality. It is over fifty years since he dazzled Graham Wallas at Harvard; it is over fifty years since he published his first book; it is over fifty years since he entered the field he so much adorns, as one of the original *New Republic* team. Since those remote days, he has been more and more a moulder (and reflector) of the public mind in America, the confidant but not the stooge or would-be *éminence grise* of Presidents. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about this remarkable man is his openness of mind. He mentions but he does not hark back to former leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. But the "Square Deal" like the "New Freedom" is in a remote past. And he is not bound even by recent orthodoxies. One of his reasons for admiring General de Gaulle is his high estimate of the General's long-sightedness (he notes the General's quite frequent short-

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sightedness in minor matters). He admires de Gaulle as Goethe admired his Pope:

... Der hohe Sinn des Papsts—
Er sieht das Kleine klein, das Grosse gross.

Mr. Lippmann is convinced that American foreign policy and domestic policy is crippled by conventional wisdom, wisdom about NATO, wisdom about Communist aggression, wisdom about a balanced budget. Disappointed in many ways by the Kennedy administration, he attributed the young President's hesitant policies, at home and abroad, to his realisation that the country agreed with General Eisenhower and not with himself. But he failed to educate the people because he had too quick and impatient a mind to have the wisdom of a teacher. (In that way he was inferior to President Johnson who, after all, had *been* a teacher.) Kennedy was not Mr. Lippmann's only disappointment. He had wanted a Republican victory in 1948 and again in 1952. (I think he is unjust both to Mr. Truman and to Mr. Acheson but that is another story.) But the healthful effects of office on a sick party were not apparent. President Eisenhower did not lead—or teach—and he left behind him a party ready for the Goldwater madness. Mr. Lippmann rightly argues that there is no danger of a one-party America, but he does not sufficiently argue the case that the traditional Republican party (whatever "tradition" can mean after 1964) must be the second party. It is not, and never will be again, the dominant party as it was when young Mr. Lippmann was dazzling Harvard; and, like me, he finds it psychologically difficult to accept that fact.

On concrete questions Mr. Lippmann is acute, often original, peddling no traditional wisdom but his own. He anticipated Mr. Enoch Powell in arguing against the policy of stopping Communism in Asia with an American military presence or by the building up of highly implausible military deterrents to Communist aggression in countries like Iran or Pakistan. He is deeply against the kind of policy now being tried out in Viet Nam of committing an American army to a war on the Asiatic mainland.

He is still a "Westerner." He believes that the Atlantic Community is *given* and that neither the Kremlin nor Peking nor his much admired General de Gaulle can alter that beneficent fact. Of course, the Atlantic Community needs a framework of military and economic strength and perhaps Mr. Lippmann was excessively pessimistic about American power in the last Eisenhower years. (So was Senator Kennedy.) He was too impressed by a false contrast between economic stagnation in the U.S.A. and economic progress in the U.S.S.R. Of course, towards the end of these interviews, he admits that Kennedy was steering the American economy in the right direction with relevant courage and skill. But it is ironical to read in the October *Socialist Commentary* the views of a leading Soviet economist who describes economic stagnation and even retrogression—in the U.S.S.R.! One could quarrel with several of Mr. Lippmann's judgments. His early estimate of the potentialities of Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania reads oddly today after the Governor's pratfall in 1964. It matters less that Mr. Lippmann (like so many others including myself) thought that the Republican party would never commit the Gadarene rush down hill of nominating Senator Goldwater, but Mr. Lippmann was prescient about the results of such a folly. Mr. Lippmann is not only *the* most important American political commentator. He is a kind of political *jurisconsultus* for his country, a role that no one in American history that I can think of, has filled before. This is an impressive and lively book disfigured by a bad chronological misprint on page 62: by cutting the second Cuban crisis by implication in 1961 (instead of 1962) Mr. Lippmann appears to foreshorten the education of Mr. Kennedy.

D. W. Brogan

A French Tragedy

The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, 1870–1. By ALISTAIR HORNE. *Macmillan*, 50s.

TO TRY to define the Commune is a task which has all the normal difficulty of placing in perspective an historical movement combined with the far more delicate appreciation of why it lent itself to the growth of a towering structure of myth which even today has an effect on French political life and provides the world Communist movement with a conveniently legendary past. Not that the *Communards* were Communists. As J. C. Bodley realised fairly early on, the programme of the Commune (in so far as it had one) was the opposite of state socialism and had its roots deep in Parisian particularism and the revolutionary memories that placed France at the head of Europe and Paris at the head of France. "The Socialists ... extol the Commune simply as the ensign of a revolutionary movement which they would like to see repeated for their own purposes." Quite so, and it was a Socialist, Marcel Sembat, who gave the best description of what had happened when he talked of the rising as "a paroxysm of generous fury." Yet Marx's

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words—"history has no example of like greatness"—coming from a man not given to admiration for others, contain another aspect of the truth. For Marx was moved by the Commune as well as being willing to use it, and the emotion that he felt is a singular proof of mythopoeic power. That in 1964 Russian astronauts should take off equipped with a *Communard* flag is an example of historical misunderstanding which must be called creative.

In the Commune, Jacobin French nationalism (that modern version of *gesta Dei per Francos*), the tenacious traditionalism of the Parisian working class (its deep conviction that it alone represented France), the misery of the *faubourgs*, and the paranoia of a population which had expected the coming of the Republic to bring about the defeat of the Prussians all united to set off an explosion that was as senseless as it was violent. For the movement had no chance of spreading to the provinces: attempts to proclaim communes at Lyons and Marseilles never really got off the ground, and, as Marx saw quite clearly, the presence of Prussian troops around Paris meant that even a march on Versailles in the early days would not have been successful. Bismarck would never have allowed a revolutionary movement to take possession of France. Quite apart from ideological considerations and the danger of the example, the French Left was for continuing the war against Prussia. It was a mark of the extraordinary intellectual isolation of the *Communards*, most of whom had been raised on memories of 1793 and a diet of revolutionary rhetoric, that they should ever have believed success possible. But most of them had spent long years frequenting small conspiratorial cliques, always in and out of prison, always expecting the millennium to be just around the corner. They were no match for Thiers, and there is no sign that they ever set before them any concrete political aim. The nearest thing to a statement of intention came in the proclamation of April 19th which demanded amongst other things: "... the absolute autonomy of the Commune extended to all the localities of France." It was the Napoleon of Notting Hill on a grand scale.

Alistair Horne recounts the tragedy of the *Communards* and the siege that preceded it with a wealth of visual detail and a lively sense of the dramatic. The siege is certainly an essential prelude to the story, since it was the abnormality of siege conditions and the feeling of humiliation that followed the surrender which created a climate of opinion in which the oratory of a small handful of revolutionaries could appeal to far wider circles than would ordinarily have been the case. A man like Louis Rossel, a regular officer who joined the Commune because it was for him "the side which has not concluded peace, and which does not include in its ranks generals guilty of capitulation" would never have been found commanding a revolutionary army but for the defeat. In 1871 Paris felt itself betrayed, and it was prepared to listen to those who claimed that they knew who the traitors were.

The momentary success of the Commune was made possible by the humiliation of defeat and by the weakening of the power of the state resulting from that defeat. There had been insurrections in Paris before—the *journées de Juillet* of 1830 and the *journées de Juin* of 1848 show how about once every twenty years during the 19th century French history was convulsed in an attempt to repeat 1789 or '92—but the extremists who found their support in the miserable *faubourgs*, Belleville, the Temple, the Bastille, and the Place de la République had never managed to control the whole of Paris. In 1830 Lafayette and the bourgeois national guards dominated the scene. In 1848 Cavaignac soon got the better of those who were told by their leaders, "You have only changed tyrants! Revenge! Build barricades!" But in 1871 war

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had removed the natural countervailing force to revolution, namely the power of the bourgeois state, and substituted another: Bismarck and the Prussian army. Paradoxically, the very conditions that allowed the Commune to take on such proportions ensured that it would be destroyed—and destroyed decisively. Since then the only armed rising in Paris has been that against the German occupation forces in 1944.

Mr. Horne is better on detailed description of the Commune than on its historical background. Some comparison of 1871 with 1848 would seem to be both necessary and obvious—particularly as regards the numbers of people who might be counted as committed supporters of the revolutionaries on each occasion—but he does not make it. Nor is there any discussion of what might be called the intellectual background of the *Communards* which is so essential to make their actions comprehensible and even credible to the reader. There is also no mention of the nascent French trade-union movement: we are told by Mr. Horne that Eugène Varlin was a bookbinder, but not that he organised bookbinders into a union or that he was one of the Commission formed to elect the workers' delegation to the London exhibition of 1861. The whole tragedy of Varlin was that he was a working class moderate of the kind who, in Britain, were busy at that time laying the foundations of British trade-unionism, but who in France were never allowed to adopt reformist tactics and were ground between repressive legislation on the one hand and revolutionary enthusiasm on the other. Mr. Horne's determination to find parallels to present-day history on every hand is also a constant irritation, and some of his political judgments are decidedly bizarre. Take this, for example:

> From the bitter hostilities engendered in 1871 was to spring the *Front Populaire*, the Socialist-Communist alliance of the 1930s, which so devitalised France; leaving her once again an easy prey to a new German menace—this time in 1940.

Here Mr. Horne appears to have swallowed the Vichy version of France's defeat in 1940 without taking into account either the length of the *Front Populaire* government (thirteen months) or what it actually did.

THE FACT IS that Mr. Horne is at his best when describing detailed events—preferably military events—and at his worst when analysing (or failing to analyse) the complex forces that make up French political and social life in the 19th century. However, it is easy enough to agree

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with at least one implication of the sentence quoted above. The Commune did have a considerable influence on French history up until the present day. It was the last of a long series of episodes which completed the alienation of the French industrial working class from bourgeois republican politics. Already in 1848 and under the Second Empire there had been widespread disillusionment. The working class had voted both for the Second Republic and for the Second Empire because they hoped great things from them. In both cases their hopes had been deceived and their subsequent resistance drastically repressed. Now, with the coming of the Third Republic, the hopes were higher and the disillusionment greater than ever. The result was a rift in the French social system that has lasted until recently when President de Gaulle and the changing industrial structure have been effective in wooing a considerable fraction of skilled industrial workers back into the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Old syndicalist attitudes are changing in France, and the present catastrophe of a Left that has been unable to evolve is only one result of time marching on.

The memory of the horrible repression of the Commune (between 20,000 and 25,000 people seem to have been killed or executed by the Versailles troops) may grow fainter, but perhaps it should not be allowed to fade altogether even for the sake of social reconciliation. The events of 1871 killed one myth which had already survived several whiffs of grapeshot: the myth of the insurrectionary commune, of the people rushing to the barricades to sweep away the effete remnants of what was still seen as the *ancien régime*. But the activities of the troops who stormed Paris started another: a tale of working class men and women shot down because they were working class, of a frightful revenge taken upon the poor by the rich and powerful. To crush a 19th-century myth Thiers created a legend that was to last well into the second half of the 20th, and the deaths of the *Communards* were to be their final and most effective gesture on behalf of their cause.

From the distance of almost a century we can only consider their doomed careers with pity (except in the case of such amateur secret policemen as Raoul Rigault) and with irony. For all its heroism and expense of generous emotions the Commune was a waste and a muddle, a monument to political unreality and organisational incompetence. Beginning with the phrases of a secular ideal, it ended in arson and anarchy answered by pitiless massacres. The road from the revolutionary ceremony at the installation of the Commune on March 28th to the killing of the hostages at La Roquette on May 24th was travelled in an incredibly short space of time. Afterwards it only remained for Gallifet and his troops to show that legality could do worse. As old Delescluze said on learning of the execution of the Archbishop of Paris: "What a war!" Within twenty-four hours he himself had gone down to die on a barricade in the Boulevard Voltaire—the last Jacobin dying for the last Parisian Commune in a street consecrated to the memory of an apostle of tolerance and enlightenment. Symbolic irony could go no further.

Anthony Hartley

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Indonesia Confronted (II)

IT IS a touristic commonplace to say that in Java we are in "a land of magic." But this truism appears somewhat less banal when one realises that the whole of Indonesian politics consists of magical processes derived from Javanese cosmogony. To interpret correctly all the speeches, manifestos, slogans and challenges of the Sukarno Government, we must refer to the accumulated traditions of Javanese mystical syncretism—while making allowances for the rapid decline of these traditions which, as we shall see, are no longer expressed in Javanese but in the kind of esperanto which is the "language of Indonesia" (*bahasa Indonesia*). Suffice it for the moment to summarise crudely and a little schematically some of the basic aspects of this complex universe.

THE AGE-OLD BASIS of Javanese civilisation is the cultivation of rice fields in irrigated terraces (*sawah*)—a system which, significantly enough, exists nowhere else in Indonesia but in the central and eastern areas of Java (*echt*-Javanese Java) and in Bali (a museum of petrified Hinduism, isolated and closed in on itself and threatening to degenerate into a touristic curiosity). It is a sort of collective gardening, stubborn and intensive, regulated by an immutable ritual discipline and subjected to an authority at once magical and bureaucratic represented on the lower echelons by the authority of the elder over the village family-tribe. This agrarian collectivism inspires the whole of the ideology of "Indonesian socialism" (Article 33 of the Constitution: "The economy will be organised as a co-operative enterprise based on the family system"). Its key-word is *gotong-royong*, a system of teamwork and mutual co-operation practised from time immemorial in the rice-growing villages. Ever since Muhamad Yamin, the late lamented ideologue and planner-in-chief of the régime, himself Javanese by adoption (and, consequently, all the more fervent) made *gotong-royong* into the national philosophy, the essence of socialism, the Five Principles, the Three Principles and Indonesian identity, this epithet is obligatory for all national institutions, from the *gotong-royong* People's Council (nominated by the President) which replaced the elected parliament, through the *gotong-royong* Eight-Year-Plan right down to the lowest *gotong-royong* regional consultative council. President Sukarno, in his famous appeals to the nation, turned it into "*gotong-royong* with sleeves rolled up," which he translated very appropriately by *Ho lopis kuntul baris—heave ho and pull together!*

> "The whole strength of the people must be canalised into one vast wave of energy . . . into one irresistible wave of *heave ho and pull together*" (*Manipol* speech, 17 August 1959).

All the speeches of the President and his henchmen evoke this vision of a collective national will straining towards the achievement of the revolutionary goals in the name of *gotong-royong*, a system which is in fact rather more reminiscent of the peaceful ideology of *mir* professed by the *narodniki* of 19th-century Russia. There is something profoundly moving in these sessions of collective hypnosis aimed at communicating to a whole people the concentrated creative energy (*daja-tjipta kreatif*) emanating from the Great Guide. The obvious misapprehension lies in the fact that not only do these spiritual enchantments find expression more easily in the demonstrations of yelling crowds than in any real effort at physical or intellectual work, but above all—and here the Javanese intelligentsia is not alone in flying in the face of reality—in the fact that a modern economy capable of feeding a population which has multiplied twenty-fold in 150 years cannot be built up and maintained by the collective enthusiasm of *ho lopis kuntul baris*. That may have been suitable for encouraging teams of workers on the rice terraces or building a temple or a *kraton*, but a modernising economy demands a rational and complex organisation which cannot dispense either with individual effort, productive capital, or technical know-how.

"Indonesian socialism," to the small extent it has tried to define itself theoretically as well as in its mental substratum, is beneath its veneer of revolutionary activism a deeply conservative policy idealising a regression towards a natural economy and the social structures of the Javanese village. The village with its council of elders is also the progenitor of the ideology of the *musjawarat* (an exact counterpart to the African "palaver") and of the *mufakat* (the unanimous consensus which must result from it). It is in the name of this that liberal democracy has been replaced by "guided democracy" which, again according to President Sukarno, "is nothing else but the family system under the authority of the eldest."

The Mandate of Heaven

EVER SINCE the dawn of Javanese history this material civilisation of the *sawah* has supported an aristocratic and bureaucratic hierarchy headed by Pharaonic kingships based

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on divine right. These were minor versions of the "Asiatic despotism" of Marx and the "hydraulic societies" of Wittfogel whose capacity for monopolising the social product is attested by the immense sacral constructions of the Hindu and Buddhist era and to whose absolute power, based on magic authority, over the waters and the earth, the crops, the life and death of the people, the ancient chroniclers bear witness. This system of kingship invested with "the mandate of heaven" is defined in metaphysical terms: the *tjakrawarti* (*chakrawartti* for Indologues) which is at once the rule of cosmic law and the universal empire of the golden age, of which each local king claimed to be the present heir; the *alam*, which is at once the kingdom, the world and nature, so that the head of state, *sjah alam*, is by definition the king of the universe and of the forces of nature; and the *kraton*, the royal city-palace which is the centre of the world and the visible image of cosmic harmony.

None of this is very original. All these terms and concepts derive from the common stock of imagery of the "Indo-Chinese" synthetic world. The only thing which perhaps distinguishes the Javanese version is a certain comic-opera quality which is already discernible in the old chronicles in the midst of all the ravages, the deportations of populations, the scorched earth, the artificial deserts created in the course of the epic wars between "Kings of the Universe."

More important is the fact that the Dutch administration, which was remarkably effective in the exploitation of natural resources and experimentation with new crops, was fundamentally conservative in the cultural and social sphere. It did everything to perpetuate, to isolate and preserve from all outside contact this closed world with its ancestral customs which made government through local chiefs so easy. This policy of paternalist conservation failed only in the case of the militant Islamic communities who always maintained contact with all the ferment and turmoil of the vast Muslim world—which explains the pre-eminent role of the Islamic reform movements in the struggle for independence, though they have now been crushed by the Javanese heirs of the Dutch empire.

In Java and, of course, in Bali, the age-old tradition of submission to the "mandate of the heaven" degenerated into functionless parasitism without being broken under the Dutch régime. It was kept alive, in the villages, by the popular *wayang* theatre, which glorifies and faithfully perpetuates all the marvels and refinements of court ritual and sacred kingship. On the completion of the national revolution, which reduced the local sultans and rajahs to an obscure or merely decorative role, the palace of the President-for-Life, the Great Guide and Supreme Commander Bung Karno (who recently discovered amongst his ancestors Gadjah Mada, the legendary chief minister of the *Madjapahit* Empire) reproduced by a sort of spontaneous regeneration the ceremonial and the governmental structure of the *kraton* of the Javanese kings. In speaking to his people Sukarno is always ready to call on the *tjakrawarti*, "the highest authority in our national life, the concept of life which animates our revolution . . ."

> "With the return to the Constitution of 1945 the Indonesian people, to a man, reverted to the *wahju tjakraningrat*, the vision of the all-powerful cosmic order" (*Manipol* speech, 17 August 1959).

The Mandate of Heaven can also take a socialist form. It is then the *Amanat Penderitaan Rakjat*, the "Mandate of the people's sufferings," with which Sukarno is invested and which he has never failed to invoke in all his speeches over the past four years. It is as the executor of the Mandate of the people's sufferings and, more recently, of the "Sufferings of all the Peoples of the World," that he has undertaken to crush imperialism, neo-colonialism, Malaysia, and everything which stands in the way of his messianic mission.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE of an aristocratic court society is honour, or more exactly prestige, with all the magical implications of the term. This maxim of Montesquieu, transplanted to Indonesia, is a commonplace about Javanese society that has been repeated a thousand times since Thomas Stamford Raffles; but it is nevertheless basic. The absolute contempt for all utilitarian (and especially commercial) activities which characterises every aristocratic civilisation based on peasant bondage, still permeates the whole of Javanese society, which produces politicians, lawyers, intellectuals, seers, and mystics, but never merchants, *entrepreneurs*, or organisers. These activities are left to the indispensable but detested foreign minorities—Malay, Chinese, or European. The expulsion of Chinese traders from the Javanese villages in 1958–9 was a complete failure, and they were eventually allowed silently to return since no autochthonous Indonesians came forward to replace the disgraced Chinese in his vital role of distributor, collector, and banker for the village. But periodically there are pogroms against Chinese quarters or Chinese shops; they are denounced as "colonialists" and "bloodsuckers," irrespective of whether they owe allegiance to Peking or Taiwan, and even if they are Indonesian nationals of distant Chinese ancestry.

For the Javanese aristocracy, the unpardonable insult to their honour is to have been dominated for more than three centuries by a little mercantile nation, remote and barbaric, showing no other than economic interest in the Indies, and

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devoid of any sense of prestige. Retrospective puzzlement with this absurd accident of history is genuine and lasting. In this society that is at once mystical and bureaucratic, *hormat*—rank, honour, prestige—is based either on the personal possession of spiritual forces or of objects charged with magic power (such as the sacred *pusaka kris*), or more often on the rank occupied in relation to the *tjakrawarti* in the complex and ever-changing hierarchy of the royal *kraton*. To ignore the role of prestige or to neglect one's own in relations with the Javanese world is to expose oneself to the worst insults, to provoke anger and contempt. It must be said that the West has not done much else. The humble persistence with which it has accepted insults and kicks while continuing to offer aid, credits, gifts, and declarations of disinterested friendship has more than justified the haughty arrogance of the Great Guide and his courtiers.

Needless to say, Sukarno's foreign policy of perpetual "confrontation" is understandable only in terms of prestige. As for domestic political life, the subtle interplay of favours and disgraces, the refined and constantly shifting hierarchies of clans and cliques, inner cabinet, executive cabinet, full cabinet, cabinet praesidium, the innumerable consultative councils, honorific posts, etc., which form the swarming court of the Great Guide—all this has made it possible to win over or appease the most tenacious oppositions by means of rewards of prestige (and, to a secondary extent, sinecures) and is typical of a society regulated by *hormat*. But, in the last resort, it is the total subordination of the country's economy to considerations of prestige which is the despair of the foreign advisers and technicians, Russian as well as Western. Honour does not forbid the acceptance of credits and non-redeemable loans, which are regarded as due tributes. Nor does it forbid the hiring of foreign technical experts—the Javanese princes always called in foreign advisers, as well as initiates of other religions, in order to appropriate their secrets. Honour only forbids the acceptance of their advice.

The Indonesian Government shows a lively interest in grandiose projects, in dazzling new installations, in the great technical playthings of the modern age. But it is less interested in the maintenance and management of these things, which appear as boring routine. The only big material project in which Sukarno has ever interested himself personally, to the point of giving it absolute priority over everything else (and the only one to have been completed more or less on time by dint of sacrificing all available resources, credits, and means of transport) was the riot of prestige building for the Asian Games in 1962: a complete Olympic city with its grandiose and useless bit of motorway, the only one in the country; a covered stadium for 100,000 people, built by the Russians for more than 20 million dollars; the Hotel Indonesia, built by the Japanese by way of reparations, a glittering, air-conditioned luxury sky-scraper soaring above a jungle of dilapidated hovels and sunken streets. And to add to the amenities of the occasion, the old tram-lines were pulled up as being unworthy of such a capital, although they were the only means of transport that still worked in this incoherent and overgrown city.

This was the *annus mirabilis* of Sukarno's reign, with the *Anschluss* of West New Guinea, the capital of which was re-christened Sukarnopura. It was also the year when the decline of the Indonesian economy accelerated into a downward rush which has never been halted. The Asian Games degenerated into an anti-imperialist crusade, a "confrontation" with the International Olympic Committee and the sacking of the Indian Embassy. Sukarno's Olympic City became the fortress of the *Ganefo* (Games of the New Emerging Forces) mounted in November 1963 as a challenge to Tokyo, the contemptible headquarters of the *Oldefo* (Old Established Forces)—a symbolic prefiguration of the challenge which the *Unnefo* (the United Nations of the New Emerging Forces) will one day throw down to the imperialist-colonialist-neo-colonialist U.N. Already, to quote the *Peking Review*, "the valiant Indonesian people has broken the stranglehold of imperialism over international sport. . . ."

All this is by way of illustrating the extent to which Javanese mystical syncretism is present in all the sayings and doings of the régime. The religious and cultural history of Java consists in the successive integration into its closed world of animistic magic of the spiritual techniques and occult formulas of each of the religions that have come from the Asian continent: the cults of Shiva, Vishnu, Buddha, and Mohammed. The successive "conversions" of the Javanese courts to new religions, and the miraculous victories of princes who had become practised in new religions, such as are set down in the old Javanese *babads*, were never anything more than adoptions of new rituals designed to win over the cosmic forces to the side of the initiate. Javanese spirituality is the accumulation of these experiences pursued over a millennium with the object of enriching the panoply of magic spells and "spiritual weapons."

This very pragmatic spiritual utilitarianism is well expressed in the Javanese dictum: "Religions are like crutches—use them if you need them, throw them away if you don't." Thus in Java, to all intents and purposes, the Islamic contribution boils down to a collection of rites and formulas superimposed on the already copious fund of magico-religious recipes without

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in any way changing the philosophy of life, the social order, the unwritten laws, or the animistic and Hinduistic practices which are so much more actual in every aspect of Javanese life, and without producing any artistic or architectural manifestation which might suggest to the uninformed visitor that he is in an Islamic country. It is the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the inexhaustible subjects of decorative art and the *wayang* theatre, that nourish both the popular and the cultivated imagination, not the *Koran*, which has been reduced to a few ill-understood verses of the *Koran* recited in Arabic as exorcisms by professionals brought in on certain occasions and assorting oddly with the cosmic rites and Hindu or Buddhist ceremonies. Whence the ever-latent and sometimes openly violent conflict between this lax Mohammedanism and the militant Islamic movements of outer Indonesia.

The effort also to integrate the Dutch intruders into the Javanese cosmos is attested by 17th-century monuments, e.g. the Dutch-style *kraton* of Tirtajasa (Banten) or the chronicle of *Babad Tanah Djawi* in which the founder of Batavia and of Dutch power in Java, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, is transformed under the name of Mur Jungkung into a legitimate Javanese prince descended from the common ancestor of so many Javanese heroes, Sikander Agung, who is none other than Alexander the Great. Unfortunately, the men of the Dutch East India Company—incorrigible mercantilists who even banned all missionary activity lest it should interfere with their trade and who harried the Portuguese Papist missionaries—were as devoid of spirituality as of *hormat*. No magic communication was possible between the Javanese universe and theirs. Therein, perhaps, lies the tragedy of this long and abortive relationship. From the point of view of the adaptation of magic formulas, the encounter between the Javanese spirit and modern technical civilisation has also proved disappointing up to now. On the other hand Marxism, adapted to the national mystique, has been easily integrated into the Javanese cosmogony under the aegis of President Sukarno and the "nationalist-religious-communist" National Front—rather in the same way as Islam—by bringing in new and efficacious formulas of purification and malediction but without in any way changing the old rites and customs.

Symbols, Rites, and Spells

IT WOULD BE TEMPTING but tedious, because of the difficulties of terminology, to show the omnipresence of this magical syncretism in the ideology and the behaviour of Sukarno's Indonesia. A good introduction to the task can be found in a reading of the President's works, especially his annual programmatic speeches which, every 17th of August, establish the new form of the national credo: *"Manipol"* (1959), *"Like an angel striking from heaven"* (1960), *"Re-So-Pim"* (1961), *"A year of triumphs"* (1962), *"The resounding voice of our Revolution"* (1963), *"Tahun vivere pericoloso"* (1964), and *"Reaching the Stars"* (1965). Instead of intelligible arguments, the listener is overwhelmed by a plethora of synthetic formulas, at once didactic and magical, in the shape of Five Principles (*Pantja Sila*) or various forms of Trinity, summing up in a single ritualistic exercise the contributions of all the religions and all the effective ideologies in the world—Islam, Christianity, Gandhism, the American Declaration of Independence, the Rights of Man, the Communist Manifesto—reconciling opposites in a single universal harmony which will establish a *Pax Humanica*:

> "Three years ago, in Washington, I proposed a *Pax Humanica* on the basis of the Declaration of Independence (American); in Moscow I based the *Pax Humanica* on passages from the Communist Manifesto" (Speech of 17 August 1959)

The *Pantja Sila* of the national coat of arms and the hastily drafted presidential unitary constitution of 1945, which was put into force again by the *coup d'état* of 1959, became transformed, under Sukarno's personal rule, by the *Manipol* (*Manifesto politik*) of 1959, into a national catechism known under the initials USDEK. Its study serves as the obligatory initiation into Indonesian politics (*Undang[4] Dasar* 1945, *Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi terpimpin, Ekonomi terpimpin, Kepribadian Indonesia*: fundamental law of 1945, Indonesian socialism, guided democracy, guided economy, Indonesian national identity). More frequent still are the *Tri Sila* or synthetic trinities such as R.I.L. (*Revolusi-Ideologi-Leadership—ril* also signifying "rail" and the revolution thus being "put back on the rails") or *Re-So-Pim* (*Revolusi-Socialisme-Pimpinan—Leadership*, the title and credo of the Presidential speech of August 17th, 1961). Finally, the cornerstone, which is the magical threefold formula of the *Nasakom* launched by the *Manipol* of 1959 and elevated into a slogan for the fundamental integration of the régime: *Nasionalisme-Agama-Komunisme* (Nationalism-Religion-Communism) a synthesis of the national spiritual forces and of the three "major" parties united in the National Front.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the spiritual and magical efficacy attributed to these formulas, the constant renewal and exegesis of which are regarded as essential contributions to the national wealth and power.

> "How lucky the Indonesian people are! Other nations have only a Proclamation *or* a Declaration of Independence. We have both a Proclama-

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tion and a Declaration.... Now, the mental conditions for our struggle are really complete. This trinity (*Re-So-Pim*) is the law of all nations. It is a universal law. To-day we possess this trinity, a R.-I.-L. trinity or a trinity of *Re-So-Pim*. We can be proud of these..." (Speech of 17 August 1961).

And needless to say, the young Indonesian intelligentsia now leaving school or university will have spent the best part of their studies assimilating and elucidating these formulas which are supposed to sum up the entire wisdom and knowledge of the universe and, at the same time, constitute the Indonesian *Weltanschauung*: the Proclamation and the Declaration, the Five Principles and the Three Principles, the *Manipol*-USDEK, *R.-I.-L.* and *Re-So-Pim*, the Mandate of the People's Suffering, the *Nasakom*, etc.

After the ritual formulas, the ritual practices. In the domestic field, one could draw up a whole inventory of the "operations" in progress —the operation of the Five Consciences, *operasi efisiensi*, operations of "spiritual retooling" (a milder version of brainwashing), the operation of the Three Consciences aimed at driving out the "three si's," *ambisi, birokrasi, korrupsi*. In the field of foreign affairs, *konfrontasi*, that new term which Indonesia has introduced into the vocabulary of international relations—a state of semi-declared war allowing the use of every kind of foul blow but excluding the risk of open military engagements—is essentially a magical operation made up of shouts, spells, and incantations with the object of crushing the adversary spiritually and persuading him to surrender without a shot being fired. This practice, tried out and perfected with astonishing success in the elimination of internal opposition, then triumphantly applied in the *Anschluss* of Dutch New Guinea, has now been carried even further afield in the "confrontation" with Malaysia and the vision of the *Mapilindo*, a new stage in the journey towards *Indonesia Raja*.

INSTEAD OF GOING methodically through the inventory of what by its very nature eludes systematisation, let us try to place the charismatic personality of Sukarno in this universe of mystical syncretism. Having visited most of the main spiritual centres of the universe, Mecca, the Vatican City, Lenin's tomb, the commemorative monuments of Washington, D.C., the United Nations, Belgrade, and Cairo, and having drawn from the fountain-head all the esoteric secrets of the modern world, he is the sovereign master of the cosmos of the spirit. And by way of a reminder of the high-falutin' side of Bung (brother) Karno, here he is addressing the not very literate Djakarta mob:

> "I don't know if you have ever read Dante Alighieri, an Italian writer of almost seven centuries ago... I feel like Dante in his Divine Comedy. I feel that our Revolution, too, has suffered all sorts of torments from all sorts of demons, all the sufferings of Hell. And then, with our return to the 1945 Constitution, we are now going through Purgatory in order eventually to be able to enter the Paradise of a just and prosperous society. The demon of liberalism, the demon of federalism, the demon of individualism, the demon of tribalism, the demon of groupism, the demon of deviation, the demon of adventurism, the demon of the four species of dualism, the demon of corruption, the demon of get-rich-quick, the demon of pluralism, the demon of rebellion, all sorts of demons assailed us in the kingdom of Hell. And now we are going through a process of purification in every sphere" (*Manipol* speech, 17 August 1959).

The National Day speech of August 17th, 1964, was in a style reminiscent of *Il Duce* at his most bombastic. In it Sukarno cited Hitler and Mussolini as the last great men produced by decadent capitalism, and celebrated in the most extravagantly baroque terms the romance of the revolution, which must be imparted to a "people with muscles of iron and bones of steel" (a people invited incidentally to eat maize). This romance was the very essence of the revolution, "the hectic dance of the national energy," the virile strength and stamina, the *razende inspiratie* and the *oerkracht*—the primordial, uncreated force. (Dutch, for long banished but familiar to Sukarno, has been restored to a place of honour in the eclectic presidential vocabulary.) "Do not think," the President said in a characteristic passage,

> "that Sukarno is a clairvoyant. Do not think that Sukarno is in possession of some kind of magic. No, when I predict this or that, my prediction is based on the objective laws of society. If I possess a magic, it is that I know the Mandate of the People's Sufferings, and that I know the efficacious science, which is Marxism."

This Marxist science was given a curious expression in the title and the conclusion of the speech, offered as a watchword for the coming year: *"Vivere pericoloso!"*[1]

[1] May the shade of Mussolini forgive his illustrious disciple for the bastardisation of his favourite slogan! *Vivere pericoloso* is obviously just as bad Italian as *Pax Humanica* is bad Latin. But what matter since it is now an honoured phrase in the Indonesian national language, just as *bifteck* ceased to be bad English by becoming good French. What the good people of Indonesia make of this vocabulary is something else again. Thus, 1964–5 being the *tahun* (year) *vivere pericoloso* (or *tavip*), a new State company which took over the monopoly of lorry and bus transport enthusiastically adopted the name *Angkatan tahun vivere pericoloso*—a highly suitable title for Indonesian road transport, though the element of sick humour was probably unintentional.

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But Marx or Mussolini notwithstanding, by his public appearances in great pomp and circumstance, by his court and his legend—which includes attempts on his life which miraculously misfire and his amatory exploits which are leaked out and magnified by gossip as a testimony to his virility and eternal youth—the *Pimpinan Besar Revolusi* is really the personification of the classical hero of the Javanese *wayang* theatre in the characteristic scene untiringly repeated in one play after another. It is the scene in which the victorious young prince of divine blood—a slim, delicate, slightly effeminate figure, always played by women in the *wayang-orang* where the puppets are replaced by actors—in the course of his peregrinations through dense jungle and enemy territory, challenges grotesque, bearded giants and lays them low without physical combat but by his spiritual power, with a slight ritual gesture of his hand or a touch of his magic *kris*. For has not Sukarno—without ever engaging his armed forces apart from a few commandos of bewildered "volunteers" whose role is purely symbolic—simply by the power of word and gesture defied and humiliated one after another all the real or imaginary giants of the modern world—the Dutch, British, Americans, Indians, Russians (contemptuously excluded from the concert of the New Emerging Forces), even the Chinese (who had to swallow without a murmur the pogroms against their compatriots in Indonesia and forgo the right to a voice in deciding their status), and also the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations—giants who always hastened to bow down before him and offer him tributes, credits, and gifts...?

Who, then, could question his right to the Mandate of Heaven? During the "year of triumph" 1962–3, this fabulous performance seemed to be on the way towards a happy and idyllic conclusion when the triumphant Sukarno, the generous prince who is always prepared to forgive the injuries he has done to others—"See, we are not a vindictive people, our hearts are not made of stone"—announced, in the best *wayang pantja sila* style, that he would be delighted to shake hands with Queen Juliana. It was the final comic opera scene in this epic march punctuated by the victories of spiritual energy over the materialistic world. Alas, at the last moment Sukarno fluffed the "happy ending" and draped himself in the sombre shroud of Mussolini. True, in the absence of Queen Juliana, her minister Joseph Luns, who for so many years had been the incarnation of the demon of evil, was triumphantly welcomed to Djakarta to the strains of *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe*. But the Dutch-Indonesian honeymoon was already darkened by the storm clouds of a new *konfrontasi* against Tunku Abdul Rahman, "this thundering lackey whose voice puts thunder to shame," who must be crushed in his turn.

There cannot be a moment's pause to think about the ills of Indonesia. There can be no respite in this "symphony of trials of strength which is the romance of our revolution," conducted in the name of a vast imperial ambition. It is impossible to know whether it is the ambition of the humble masses in the rice-fields. It is certainly not the ambition of the more earth-bound minorities of the "outer islands." But it indubitably inspires the Javanese intelligentsia who throng the avenues of Sukarno's *kraton*. That logic, too, for a régime which cannot live except by self-glorification, is irresistible.

Java, Victorious and Vanquished

HERE I MUST digress. It is not only the more and more striking resemblance between the Great Guide and the late *Duce* reviving a comic-opera Roman Empire which suggests doubts about the authenticity of this Greater Javanese myth in action. The patient reader who has followed this exploration of a rhetoric run wild may perhaps have been embarrassed *en route* by the intellectual mediocrity of these synthetic formulas. He may even have found an element of trumpery and vulgar gibberish in this so-called magic universe, despite the proven efficacy of these practices in the contemporary world, which is so favourable to fairground Caesars. *Manipol*, *Re-So-Pim* or *Nasakom*, *Oldefo* or *Nekolim* ("neo-colonialism-colonialism-imperialism"), these verbal incarnations of good and evil cannot claim to express an age-old spirituality, aristocratic and refined. The inscriptions on the streamers which decorate Djakarta, such as *"Realisasi Bandung spirit," "Successkan Konperensi Asia-Afrika," "Vivere pericoloso,"* or *"Ganyang Kontra-Revolusi"*—no need to translate—are a hodgepodge of international gobbledygook. But therein, perhaps, lies the real tragedy of the Javanese victory embodied in this magician born of a Javanese schoolteacher and a Balinese woman.

Java, by the weight of its numbers, by the unity of its culture and by its physical need to rule, has managed to impose its political system, its personnel and its doctrine on the vast archipelago inherited from the Dutch empire. But it has been unable to impose its culture and civilisation. This Javanese civilisation, stylised, hybrid, caught up for centuries in the refinements of a decadent High Rococo; the Javanese language with its script derived from Pali, its fantastically rich and scarcely explored literary and oral traditions, its luxuriant vocabulary expressive of an animistic sensibility personifying every object or detail of nature as well as the

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elaborate courtesy of a caste society which makes an esoteric science simply of the way one refers to oneself or addresses a person according to his respective rank and pretensions; the national theatre-opera, both popular and courtly, with its untranslatable subtleties, its incantatory music which, with its rhythms and alternating scales, is one of the most delicate in the world—all this is strictly unexportable and unassimilable by the non-Javanese populations of Indonesia, more plebeian, more "materialist," and less impervious to outside influences.

Unable to "Javanise" Indonesia, Java, in the name of a national unity which is the condition of its survival, had to become Indonesian, that is to say come down to the level of its "inferiors" and gradually merge itself into a completely synthetic nationality. The unity programme of the nationalist movement, proclaimed as early as 1928 in the "pledge of youth"—"one nation, one country, one language"—postulated the building-up from scratch of a unitary nationality shaped to the geographical framework of the Dutch East Indies (re-christened "Indonesia" by a Greek vocable invented by German scholars after the pattern of all the Polynesias, Melanesias, and Micronesias) as well as a synthetic culture and language to which the traditional cultures, beginning with the richest, the Javanese, must be sacrificed.

THE IMPLEMENTATION of this programme of unification—first of all in the ranks of the nationalist intelligentsia, then under the Japanese occupation, and finally, and at full speed, since independence—makes Indonesia a unique example of "nationalisation" consciously conceived and realised. The strongest expression of this nationalisation by act of will is the effective introduction throughout the whole archipelago—aided by the rapid programme of uniform education and by isolation from the outside world—of a synthetic "national language," *bahasa Indonesia*, written in Latin characters and created on the basis of the *lingua franca* of maritime South-east Asia, Malay. This was at the outset a language of merchants and sailors, without empty refinements, born at the commercial crossroads of South-east Asia, with a rudimentary vocabulary and morphology (almost comparable to pidgin-English), the favourite vehicle of Islamic penetration, stuffed with Indian and Arabic terms as well as borrowings from all the local vernacular languages, compounded by the colonial administrations and the Europeans as a "common language" suitable for the use of *compradores* and servants. The *bahasa melaju umum* was used by the nationalist writers and agitators from 1920–8 as the only possible instrument of unification, until it developed into the *bahasa nasional* administered by national linguistic commissions at the time of the Japanese occupation.

This synthetic national language is still at the drawing-board stage. The "Commission of Terms," established in 1952 as a section of the National Institute of Language and Culture, enriched its vocabulary, during the first decade of its activity, by more than 300,000 new terms formed by borrowing copiously and indiscriminately from all the technical terminologies and ideological abstractions of the modern world, not to mention the innumerable personal contributions of Sukarno. (It has been said that the linguistic industry is the only one besides the banknote industry really to flourish under his rule.) Whatever the current aberrations of this official esperanto, the old language of the bazaars is nevertheless in process of being transformed into an instrument capable of assimilating modern thought and science—in spite of its structural fluidity which makes it ill-suited to precision and analysis—and it is already far removed from pre-war Malay. Elaborated from day to day by intellectuals and ideologues, it is of course still mainly a language of school primers, functionaries, journalists, and orators. It is scarcely intelligible, in its newer parts, to the average Indonesian, who listens to the official speeches all the more admiringly for being able to make nothing of them. But as a language of education and of State it has been imposed all the more easily for having no serious rival—since Dutch, quite apart from the state of relations with the old metropolis, could obviously not offer a means of international communication to an independent Indonesia, as English and French have done in other parts of the uncommitted world.

The reverse side of this success, for the present, is that it is a language without a real cultural past, without formal traditions and with no literature other than that of the writers engaged in the nationalist movement over the past forty years, the best of whom are to-day outlawed by the régime's beetle-browed censorship, which tolerates only obsequious mediocre adulators. Whence the paradox of a nation in the making which is learning to read at breakneck speed and is given only pamphlets and patriotic albums to plough through, and which in the process of becoming a nation has cut itself off from its past and its traditions without finding new sustenance. Classical Javanese will no doubt survive in traditionalist sanctuaries and in the villages as long as the *wayang* plays are performed and the classical legends recounted there. But as it ceases to be written and printed it is gradually lapsing into *patois* or disappearing altogether in the "Indonesianised" cities of Java. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ("Unity in Diversity")—

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the federalist motto inscribed on the Indonesian coat of arms—is the only text in the Javanese language still visible in public, and its meaning has fallen into oblivion, for Java too could only have remained Javanese in a federal Indonesia.

In the same way, the national music introduced by the régime, from the national anthem to the productions of the official radio and the popular orchestras, is not a Javanese music but the Malay *krontjong*, of Portuguese-Moorish origin, which at best is reminiscent of Brazilian popular music. The national folk-lore, cultivated under government tutelage, is scarcely more than a touristic exoticism.

THERE IS no *tabula rasa* in history, and we have seen to what extent this nationalist-revolutionary régime remains haunted by the demons and phantoms of the Javanese past, though the phantoms have an air of *papier mâché* counterfeits. Thus the sort of existential anguish with which the representative intelligentsia of present-day Indonesia puzzles over the problem of the national identity—to establish who is this national "I" which asserts itself so noisily in the face of the world—is a fitting obsession for a Javanese *élite* which is losing its own personality in identifying itself with an artificial nation. It is an obsession unknown to the other populations of the archipelago, who look on in a state of bewilderment at the ritual exorcising of the Javanese demons. This rupture with the cultural past, combined with the increasingly stifling intellectual autarchy imposed on Indonesia by Sukarno, is at present resulting in a sort of artificial desert haunted by broken-down spectres, from beneath which, perhaps, new blossoms will one day emerge. For the present, each partner in this synthetic union has sacrificed its most unique possession to the national idea: Java its ancestral cultural tradition, the Outer Archipelago its potential prosperity, its development, and its open relationship with the outside world which is the peculiar gift of maritime peoples. But at the end of this process of levelling the cure perhaps will come. Unable either to absorb Indonesia or let go of it, and ceasing to be the prisoner of its unwieldy spiritual heritage, Java will be re-absorbed into an Indonesia which will at last be able to "confront" its own problems. But what will this post-Sukarno Indonesia be at the end of this road?

Dangerous Passage?

ONE COULD GO ON arguing for ever about the extent and duration of the gratuitous follies required to "forge a national consciousness." The historical experience of the West is scarcely encouraging in this respect. It is perfectly possible to maintain that "building a nation" is an infinitely more important and more glorious enterprise than building a viable economy: Indonesia will always have its quasi-inexhaustible soil and sub-soil, and the material damage wrought by the reign of Sukarno will be repaired after a few years of efficient or merely adequate management, while the hard-earned national unity acquired in the course of this adventure will still remain. This is no doubt true as regards the achievements of the gigantic effort of education and the implanting of a common language bearing a common message to the whole post-war generation—an effort, be it said, which has been carried out over twenty years and which Sukarno has merely subordinated to an ideological intoxication which has degraded both the teaching and the teachers. It may also be true as regards the consciousness of having faced great ordeals together, ordeals which were not all unavoidable but which in the end the people can be proud of having overcome. But it would be dangerous to assume that this national unity has been established on a lasting basis by the artificial frenzies and agitations with which the Great Guide has succeeded in mesmerising the masses and silencing opposition. That unity may be shattered one day in a general sobering up, the consequences of which are unforeseeable and may well be surprising.

"Politics continue to move to the left, but stomachs move to the right," the Communist leader Mr. Aidit remarked bitterly a few months ago. The officials of a régime which had promised to turn Indonesia into a great modern country jauntily affirm that Indonesia is invulnerable to inflation and economic disorganisation since the mass of its population lives outside any monetary or trade system. There is something frightening about these eulogies of the economic regression which has carved the country up into small autarchic units. In triumphantly establishing national unity through the magic of the word, these officials have totally neglected those other factors of unity—a coherent national economy and the physical means of trade and communication. Indonesia cannot go bankrupt, but a régime can, and the incompatibility between an economy in process of regression towards village autarchy and a State with pretensions to world power on the political, diplomatic, and military planes will eventually become too glaring to be ignored.

POSTSCRIPT: Many things have happened since this article was written. The comic element, so exhilarating only a few months ago, has almost disappeared from this tragi-comedy of an ageing tightrope walker still performing his balancing act over his self-created chaos, and using his last energies to maintain an appearance of

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vigour, extravaganza, and *vivere pericoloso*. The show had been dragging on too long even for the most patient *wayang* public.

What was due to happen the day after Sukarno has finally happened before his exit. Preparations for the inevitable showdown had gone too far on all sides to wait endlessly for the fatal hour. The "Body for Promoting Sukarnoism" (*i.e.*, after his death), which grouping together all the rebuffed heirs to the throne, the Army, the "liberals," the "Trotskyites," the supporters of Russia, America, and other *"Old Foes,"* and all those who were not aligned with Peking, had been ready since Sukarno's first serious ailments in Autumn 1964. Its adherents had already been busy last winter effacing the "KOM" from "NASAKOM" on the walls of Djakarta. The move had been premature, and Bung Karno, resurrecting fresh and angry like an embodiment of all New Emerging Forces of the world, banned the "Body"—though not its supporters—and shouted: "I *am* NASAKOM!" And the show went on, more extravagant and frenzied than ever. *"Banteng stir!"*—"slam the steering wheel (to the left)!," and out he walked from the *Oldefo*'s United Nations towards 1965's Second Bandung and 1966's World Revolutionary Rally of the New Emerging Forces of Asia-Africa-Latin America against Malaysia, NAKOLIM, and *pax imperialistica*.

But since his resurrection, the only good news Sukarno had to announce to his people, again and again, was that he was still alive and healthy, and these jubilant announcements soon took on a dismal note of long-protracted agony. Spring and summer were spent by the expectant heirs in demonstrations of force in the form of enormous mass rallies in the capital. The Communist Party claimed 3 million registered members and 20 million adherents of its front organisations; the Nationalist Party outdid its rival by claiming 4·5 million card-bearing members and 50 million adherents; the *Nahdatul Ulama* outdid them all by boasting 6 million members and 20 million adherents in Java and South Sumatra alone; the total finally exceeded the total population of the Island Empire. Sukarno went on presiding over them all, and they all pledged themselves to die for Sukarno and NASAKOM. But finally something had to give, someone had to start dying. The Communist Party began clamouring for an all-out distribution of arms to "the revolutionary workers and peasants" (in order to crush Malaysia, needless to say); Chou En-Lai strongly recommended his Indonesian comrade to arm a revolutionary people's militia of 20 million (always to crush Malaysia); and Sukarno earnestly requested the generals Nasution and Yani to *"nasakomise"* the armed forces. But more and more the Leader's intimations met with warm applause and no obedience. Next on the agenda was a *coup d'état* by the president and his faithful bodyguard to slaughter the *nasa*-without-*kom* generals. The *coup* narrowly failed, and the (illegal) Body for the Promotion of Sukarnoism rose to power, reluctantly presided over by the President-for-Life, more and more resembling Mussolini rescued from the Gran Sasso. The outcome—if there is an outcome—will perhaps by now be known to the reader. . . .

WHAT IS REAL? Is there anything real in Bung Karno's Indonesia? In a strange way, this huge, and heavily-armed country full of sound and fury and decay ceased years ago to belong to the world of today. When Indonesia, taking the lead of the New Emerging Forces, slammed the door of the *Oldefo*'s United Nations, nobody seemed to pay attention. Bung Karno's appearance in Cairo, this summer, on the way to the ill-fated Afro-Asian Algiers conference, was like the appearance of a ghost from "the first Bandung" in quest of a new lease of life for his vanished glories. Even his all-out *Crush-Malaysia* campaign has so little affected his small neighbour that the intra-Malaysia scramble went on quietly as if no frenzied giant stood threatening across the Straits.

All these increasingly flamboyant and increasingly aimless manifestations of world-revolutionary activism—in order to escape the dreaded confrontation with Indonesia's domestic ills—have been but wild gambles on some turn of events which might or might not happen quite independently of Indonesia's doings or sayings. It was, basically, a gamble on that final victory of East Wind over West Wind which would have re-established Bung Karno in his prestige as a never-failing prophet of things to come. An American disaster in Viet Nam, or a panic retreat of the "paper tigers" from South-east Asia, would indeed have brought mighty new winds into the slackening banners of Bandung; the world would have seen the Bung's apotheosis as a satellite god riding on the rest of the Chinese wave. The winds blew all right, but there was something wrong with this demonological geography. Seen from Djakarta, America is East and China is rather North-west. In a strangely distorted and exaggerated way the Indonesian scene simply reflects the changing "winds of history." The slogans need not change: China may become NEKOLIM (already Chinese consulates have become "foreign imperialist bases") and the Communist Party can be denounced as a stooge of the CIA; the "Guardian of the Archipelago," Aidit, can become the new Father of the Seven Devils, and NASASOS (sos vaguely meaning *Sosialisme*) can easily be substituted for NASAKOM.

But the drama has not become more reasonable since the *wayang* scene is stained with blood. The prospect of having to face the problems of domestic reconstruction instead of shouting slogans is no less frightening for Indonesia's generals than for her politicians. Ten years ago a younger and less self-intoxicated Sukarno proclaimed at Bandung:

> "What can we do? The peoples of Asia and Africa wield little physical power. . . . We cannot indulge in power politics. . . . We can inject the voice of reason into the world affairs."

After ten years of maddening orgies of vituperation and demon-hunting, the voices of reason that would try to make themselves heard in domestic affairs are not to be envied. Among all the attributes of Sukarnoism, the "Mandate of the People's Suffering" will be the last to expire.

Herbert Luethy

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EAST & WEST

Writers & the Police

"In the course of the interrogation it was established that everything I had written was pure invention, the product of a morbid and ill-intentioned mind...."

TERTZ, THE TRIAL BEGINS (1960)

"The investigation continues. Any moment there will be a new wave of arrests. If they search the house and find this manuscript under the floorboards, they'll pick up every single one of us...."

TERTZ, THE MAKEPEACE EXPERIMENT (1965)

"Man becomes a truly sincere and valuable being once he loses his official attributes—his profession, his name, his age...."

TERTZ, THOUGHTS UNAWARE (1965)

How ironic it is that at the moment when a Soviet writer has been awarded a Nobel Prize for literature, other Soviet writers should go to prison for exercising their profession in the light of their own conscience.

When the people of Veshenskaya village in the Don Cossack country learnt about Sholokhov's award they began dancing around the writer's house. The Soviet press was delighted and featured the event for weeks. Gone were the abusive words about the Swedish Academy, considered at the time of the Pasternak affair to be "an instrument of imperialist intrigues." Sholokhov, who had been so sarcastic about it, clearly had no intention of renouncing the award, and of course nobody made the effort to compel *him* to do so. Nor was Jean-Paul Sartre heard to suggest that Sholokhov should follow his own example. The Western "bourgeois" press applauded the decision: although Sholokhov has not written any major work for the last 25 years, all critics seemed to agree that he fully deserved the Prize for his early masterpiece—even if there was some doubt as to which edition was to serve as the authorised version of *The Quiet Don* (it had been rewritten more than once to suit the Party line).

Yet there was a jarring note in the jubilation. *Le Monde* suggested that now that the author of *The Fate of a Man* has joined "the community of great writers," he was under an obligation to intervene with the Soviet authorities on behalf of Sinyavsky: were he to do so, he would show not only aesthetically, but also morally, that he deserved the international honour.

In the West, Mr. David Carver, the general secretary of the international association of writers, P.E.N., sent on November 11, 1965, a telegram of protest to Alexei Surkov, of the Soviet Writers' Union. Tertz' British publishers, Collins, declared:

> A writer has the right to try to make his work known to the reading public. It is not a crime under Soviet law to send manuscripts abroad. The dilemma of a writer such as Tertz is one created by Soviet literary policy, which faces him with the choice of either being silent or compromising his artistic integrity. The only way out for a writer of Tertz' uncompromising honesty was to publish his manuscripts abroad. For this he should be admired and not condemned.
>
> It should be noted that Pasternak was not arrested for sending the manuscript of *Dr. Zhivago* to Italy, and that Valeriy Tarsis suffered no penal consequences for sending the manuscript of *Ward 7* abroad.

Many prominent literary personalities have now joined in the protest, including the French Nobel Prize-winner, François Mauriac, Alberto Moravia, Arthur Miller, and others.

ON *September 13, Andrei Sinyavsky, a literary critic and historian, and Yuli Daniel, a poet-translator, were arrested in Moscow. The news was first publicly announced on October 9 by Giancarlo Vigorelli, Secretary of the European Community of Writers* (COMES), *at its meeting in Rome. A week later Western correspondents in Moscow were told by "usually reliable sources" that the two writers were to be charged with "anti-Soviet activity," having allegedly sent to the West manuscripts published here under the pseudonyms "Abram Tertz" and "Nikolai Arzhak." Such charges, under Article 70 of the Soviet Criminal Code, carry maximum sentences of up to seven years in prison, followed by five years in a labour camp.*

The various works of the two writers have first been published by M. Jerzy Giedroyc, editor of the Polish literary monthly Kultura *in Paris. After initially denying it, he has since confirmed that the two arrested Soviet writers are in fact Tertz and Arzhak. Although a Moscow dispatch from Edmund Stevens appeared in the* Sunday Times *suggesting that the two writers had been freed, Alexei Surkov at a press conference in Paris (where he was leading a Russian writers' delegation) officially confirmed that the two writers were under arrest and would soon be tried. There was a "Tertz" touch about it all: the* Sunday Times' *explanation was that the two men were "paroled for the period of the holiday celebrating the anniversary of the Revolution" and then "they returned to gaol."*

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THE CASE IS NOT ONLY full of dramatic irony, but it may well be one of the most extraordinary cases in recent literary history. It is more than a sensational instance of literary clandestinity. If Sinyavsky is indeed Tertz, this is a case of a man who not only lived two parallel literary existences, but who achieved distinction in one of them as a literary scholar and critic and in the other as a writer of fiction, and who in each case employed a very different "individual style."

Abram Tertz is well known and appreciated in the West; his books have been published in twenty languages. His essay *On Socialist Realism*, which appeared in 1959, was a sharp dissent from the official Soviet aesthetic doctrine, boldly proclaiming faith in a "phantasmagoric style" and "an art in which the grotesque will replace realistic descriptions of life." According to Tertz,

> such an art would correspond best to the spirit of our time. May the fantastic imagery of Hoffmann and Dostoevsky, of Goya, Chagall and Mayakovsky . . . and of many other realists and non-realists teach us how to be truthful with the aid of the absurd and the fantastic.

This promise was made good. In his novels and stories[1]—*The Trial Begins, The Icicle,* and *The Makepeace Experiment*—Tertz gave artistic expression to his theoretical propositions and was widely acclaimed for style, humour, and inventiveness. Apart from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Tertz is undoubtedly the most outstanding talent to emerge in Russia since the pre-Stalinist 'twenties. His imagination has been compared to that of Leskov, his satire to that of Gogol, his fantasy to that of Kafka; certainly his preoccupation with the question "how to restore love to the human heart" reminds one of Dostoevsky. A writer in the *New York Times* observed that "in a more rational and freer world, any Russian writer might well be proud of having written the fiction, essays, and aphorisms of 'Abram Tertz'. . . ."

Has he already reached his maturity? Perhaps not. Still, both the accomplishment and originality are there. More than that, he appears to be firmly rooted in the realities of his own country, drawing on his specific experience of Soviet life for his extraordinary fantasies and allegories. He has registered his disenchantment clearly enough:

> To our new God we sacrificed not only our lives, our blood and our bodies. We also sacrificed our snow white soul after staining it with all the filth of the world. . . . So that prisons should vanish for ever we built new prisons. So that all frontiers should fall, we surrounded ourselves with a Chinese wall. So that work should become a rest and a pleasure, we introduced forced labour. So that not one drop of blood be shed anymore, we killed and killed and killed.
>
> In the name of the Purpose, we turned to the means that our enemies used: we glorified Imperial Russia, we wrote lies in *Pravda*, we set a new Tsar on the now empty throne, we introduced officers, epaulettes and tortures. . . .

Thus he differs from some other of the younger writers who have emerged since Stalin's death (*e.g.* Tendryakov, Kazakov). They have been able to get their works published and even officially accepted; perhaps the main difference is between their more straightforward realism and his almost surrealist style which owes more to Gogol and Dostoevsky than to Tolstoy and Chekhov.

To accuse him of being "anti-Soviet" is irrelevant and superficial. Was Dostoevsky anti-Russian? or Faulkner anti-American? His attitude to the environment in which he has grown up and been formed, as surely as Mirgorod and Petersburg formed Gogol, or Oxford, Mississippi, formed Faulkner, is certainly satirical. But his contemplation of human folly in its specifically Soviet setting has not led him to a Swiftian contempt for mankind.

THE WORK OF "Tertz" would be outstanding enough in itself as literary achievement, but his double, Andrei Sinyavsky, a literary historian and critic, has also achieved remarkable success, despite the fact that in this role his artistic exuberance had of necessity to be subdued and cautious. His writings under his own by-line were almost unknown in the West.

Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel both belong to the Russian generation which went through the war and came back to their university studies in those early post-war years when the intellectual life of the country was dominated by an atmosphere of total terror. The creative forces among the intelligentsia could do nothing but lie low. They seemed cowed and submissive to the eyes of the outside observer, but often the struggle to maintain intellectual and moral integrity in such conditions was invisible and heroic. In the past their only mode of expression

[1] "The Trial Begins" was first published in ENCOUNTER, January 1960, and "The Icicle" in February 1962. In his essay on Socialist Realism, incidentally, Tertz praised Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* but remarked that as a model for "Socialist realist" writing it had, curiously enough, found no imitators. In a recent interview, Sholokhov remarked (*Daily Telegraph*, December 1st): "I am for writers who write honestly, looking into the eyes of the authorities, and who write for publishers here and not abroad. . . ."

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was silence; their symbol was Boris Pasternak. In more recent years people like Sinyavsky have played an important public role in articulating humanist values, in defending them against the "dogmatists." The effort was being made, on the one hand, to restore the broken continuity with the past of Russian literature, and, on the other, to elaborate the rationale for "new writing" free from the socialist-realist dogmas of *partiinost* and *narodnost*. Many of these writers and critics have been associated with the Gorky Institute of World Literature; their ideas have increasingly found open expression in the pages of a journal like *Novy Mir*, the main forum of "the liberals." It was here that Sinyavsky published most of his articles and book reviews and Daniel has published his translations of non-Russian poets.

Daniel is a comparatively inconspicuous figure whose published work consists of skilful rendering of verse from Slav, Yiddish, and Caucasian languages. His Arzhak story, "This is Moscow Speaking," is a fantasy of what would happen if a dictatorial government suddenly announced a "Day of Permitted Murders." His story "The Man from MINAP" is about a student at a Moscow Scientific Institute whose special ability to determine the sex of a child at conception is based on an extraordinary effort of concentration (he thinks of Karl Marx).

Sinyavsky, who after the war studied at Moscow University (Stalin's daughter Svetlana was his fellow student there), obtained his doctorate in the early 1950s at the age of 27. His dissertation was on Maxim Gorky's long, unfinished novel *Klim Samgin*. He seems to have combined a career of research and teaching at Moscow University with the writing of essays and reviews. He has recently become one of the most articulate and effective spokesmen for the Moscow literary intelligentsia, among whom there was deep and widespread shock at his arrest.

For many Russians his name has been linked with that of Pasternak, whose disciple he was. It was Sinyavsky who wrote the long, scholarly introduction to a new edition of Pasternak's poetry, finally published in Moscow after many quarrel-filled delays over what could, or could not, be included. This volume is a significant step forward—even though it does not include such a key poem as "Hamlet" from the *Zhivago* cycle—after the meagre selection which appeared in 1961. Sinyavsky made his mark by reviewing this older anthology for *Novy Mir* (March 1962). For him the selection was biased and unrepresentative; individual poems had been censored; "a number of memorable verses are missing, others have been changed, in some poems the ending is missing." In the recent edition—in large measure due to Sinyavsky's efforts—much of this damage has been repaired. For example, the first stanzas of Pasternak's famous poem about Alexander Blok—discreetly replaced by asterisks in the 1961 edition!—have now been made available to Russian readers. The first of these stanzas is:

Only the influential yes-men know
Whom critics are to propagate
With praise, or criticise
And liquidate.

Who can doubt that Sinyavsky has landed in his present predicament because he has run afoul of "the influential yes-men"? They prevented Boris Pasternak from accepting the

An Appeal for Tolerance

SIR,—*You have reported briefly in your columns the message which has been sent by Mr. David Carver, Secretary of the International P.E.N., to Mr. Alexei Surkov of the Soviet Writers' Union.*

We should like to associate ourselves with his protest and his plea.

The full text of his telegram reads:

"WE ARE GRIEVED AND SHOCKED TO LEARN OF THE ARREST OF THE DISTINGUISHED WRITERS ANDREI SINYAVSKY AND YULI DANIEL. FEAR THESE ARRESTS WILL HAVE GRAVE EFFECT ON PUBLIC OPINION AND IMPEDE GROWTH OF CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN WRITERS. URGE YOU INTERVENE WITH COMPETENT AUTHORITIES."

The imprisonment of these writers cannot but throw a shadow, not only over the efforts of East-West cultural co-operation and exchange, but also over the honour being done to Russian literature by the Nobel Prize Award to Mikhail Sholokhov next month in Stockholm.

We deeply hope that in the case of these two writers both tolerance and legality will prevail. It is no crime in the U.S.S.R., or in any other land with a civilised constitution and code of law, to send manuscripts abroad to be published. In any case, the works which Sinyavsky and Daniel are said to have published in the West under the pen names of Tertz and Arzhak respectively were notable contributions to contemporary letters. Surely the Soviet authorities have outgrown the old Stalinist (and Tzarist) fear of literature and literary criticism? We hope they will reconsider these unfortunate arrests.

Yours faithfully,

A. ALVAREZ — CYRIL CONNOLLY
BRIAN GLANVILLE — GORONWY REES
CLANCY SIGAL — PHILIP TOYNBEE
JOHN WAIN — C. V. WEDGWOOD
REBECCA WEST

The Times (London), 24 November

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Nobel Prize (and they now rejoice in the award of it to a more acceptable laureate).

SINYAVSKY'S INTERPRETATION of Pasternak, as expounded first in his 1962 article and at greater length in his introduction to the 1965 edition, is probably the most sophisticated to have appeared so far in any language. Both essays illuminate Pasternak's difficult poetry for the reader with scholarship and critical sensitivity. His central problem is how Pasternak sought profound, though unobtrusive, poetic sermons in humble everyday activity, the humdrum and the commonplace, in nature and in all other things taken for granted by man in the heat of his "historical" pursuits. In this respect Sinyavsky found that Pasternak was in many ways a kindred spirit to the late Robert Frost (about whom he wrote a perceptive essay in *Novy Mir* for January 1964).

Sinyavsky has outraged Russia's literary establishment not only by his subtle advocacy of Pasternakian values, but also by several frontal attacks on the "dogmatists." The most notable appeared in the December issue of *Novy Mir* in 1964. It is a review of a scurrilous novel, *The Blight*, by Ivan Shevtsov, lampooning Soviet artists in the spirit of Khrushchev's notorious attack on them during his visit to the Manège art exhibition in 1962. The novel appeared somewhat belatedly (in time for Khrushchev's fall) in an edition of a hundred thousand. Like Kochetov's novel, *The Brothers Yershov*, it was intended to whip up popular feeling against Soviet artists who had deviated from "socialist realism," and to represent them as degenerates and criminals; they were bent on subverting the established order by such well co-ordinated, conspiratorial methods that the defenders of the faith are almost powerless. At first sight Sinyavsky's review of this particularly grotesque neo-Stalinist fantasy might appear to be just another blow in the running fight that has now been going on for several years between the "liberals" and "conservatives" (or whatever one chooses to call them) in the Soviet press. This polemic has been legitimised by the "cultural" powers-that-be. Apart from brief interludes (at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963 when Khrushchev temporarily upset the balance between the two sides), the polemic has gone on as rhythmically as a ping-pong match. In his review Sinyavsky begs off polemic in a way which characterises his cultivated mind. "Perhaps, rather than attack Ivan Shevtsov, it would be better to pity him, to sympathise with him...." One can imagine how this appeal for calm must have infuriated the dogmatists. Sinyavsky's attempt to raise the level of Soviet literary criticism to that of civilised discourse as it is universally understood is no doubt part of his "estrangement."

There were several earlier skirmishes in print with the dogmatists. He was attacked by them for his article on the pre-revolutionary poetic school of *Acmeism* (which he praised in the *Concise Literary Encyclopedia*) and for his contribution to the third volume of the history of *Soviet Russian Literature: 1941–1957* (in which he was critical of false war heroics). According to the die-hard literary journals, the former provided "evidence of serious shortcomings" (*Literatura i Zhizn*, July 19th, 1962), and the latter was particularly "pernicious":

> Here an attempt is made to interpret the character of the Great Patriotic War hero portrayed in the works of Soviet writers. According to Sinyavsky, it appears that there was really nothing heroic about him; he was just an ordinary small man.... (*Oktyabr*, No. 9, 1961)

Sinyavsky, who is himself a war veteran, replied by attacking the dogmatists for "embellishing" reality. He also took up the defence of the young poets, praising Voznesensky, Evtushenko, and Akhmadulina. In an article, "For Poetic Activity" (written in collaboration with another liberal critic, A. Menshutin), he voiced an individualistic poetic *credo* which is anathema to the Party overseers of literature:

> In the poetry of today one feels a need for a deeper involvement in life... to relate poetry to one's own experience... to find out one's own standpoint on reality.... (*Novy Mir*, No. 1, 1961)

This, needless to say, was qualified by the literary functionaries as a distortion which over-emphasises "the subjective at the expense of the objective" and "the literary form at the expense of vital content" (V. Bushin, "Violets Smell Differently," *Literatura i Zhizn*, February 17th, 1961).

IN 1964 SINYAVSKY published (with Menshutin) a major work on *Poetry of the Early Revolutionary Days: 1917–1920*, which appeared under the sponsorship of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. This volume of almost 450 pages has been listed by *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 30th, 1965) as one of "the more important books published in languages other than English since the end of 1959."

Sinyavsky's literary position is reflected in this book as clearly as in his introduction to the Pasternak poems. He stresses that "new poetry" emerges as a result not only of new content but also of new artistic form, or of revitalised use of the traditional forms. He was most explicit in the March 1965 issue of *Novy Mir*, where he puts his hope in the emergence of a literary "movement breaking down dogmas and clichés, not tolerating compromises, striving to live in a new way, in its own way...."

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His many-sided interests include science-fiction, on which he has written two critical essays, and painting. Sinyavsky (together with I. Golomshtok) has published a popular booklet on Pablo Picasso (printed in 1960 in an edition of 100,000 copies) presenting him for the first time to the Soviet public, explaining his works and his role in the development of modern painting and modern art in general. He has thus broken the "socialist-realist" taboos in several fields of artistic endeavour and carried on the many-faceted struggle for intellectual and artistic emancipation and for access to modern culture.

His arrest is a blow to the whole milieu of the Soviet liberal intelligentsia and more particularly to that of the magazine *Novy Mir*, whose editor, Alexander Tvardovsky, had praised him in its Fortieth Anniversary edition (January 1965).

NOVY MIR has been under fire for a long time. A particularly vicious attack on it came in early August, when the critic Yuri Lukin published an article in *Pravda* called "Only a Semblance of the Truth," in which he was specially incensed about the novelette by Vasiliy Semin which appeared in the June issue of *Novy Mir*. Lukin argued that by portraying only "small truths," Semin had arrived at "the big untruth."

Given his connection with *Novy Mir*, Sinyavsky's arrest a month later must have looked ominous to the nonconformist writers. Yet the editors of the magazine have reacted in such a way as to show that they have by no means given up the struggle. As one of them once said (in a conversation with the Yugoslav, Mihajlo Mihajlov): "If we are attacked we won't limit ourselves to a defensive posture...."[2]

And indeed, the new issue of *Novy Mir* which went to press three weeks late (after Sinyavsky's arrest), took up the challenge by reasserting its policy of publishing works which provide "a sober understanding of life as it is," rather than a picture of "illusory well-being." The editorial, which seems to have been hastily added at the end of the magazine, referred to its programmatic anniversary article and declared that in the controversy about it "the old problem of truth in the arts has occupied the centre of attention." It condemned the concept of dividing truth into "great truths" and "small truths":

> There cannot be any truth, provided it is really truth, which would be unnecessary, dangerous, or insignificant to our literature, just as there is no lie that could be in any way useful to it.... [To those who say] "Not all kinds of truth are needed," we reply: "No, our art needs the whole truth."

Thus the battle continues. In this battle the fate of Sinyavsky is not just "the fate of a man," but it clearly has a bearing on the course of Russian literature as a whole. This situation is not a new one in Russian history. When Pushkin had written his poem "André Chénier in Prison" the censors excised several stanzas; it circulated nevertheless in its original form in manuscript. The story of the illegal manuscripts of Chaadayev and Belinsky and their troubles with the censors are too well known to need recounting. The attitude of Russian officialdom to writers appears, unfortunately, to have changed little since the days when the Tsarist Police Chief, Benckendorff, made the inglorious and unforgettable comment on Pushkin's death: "Why do you make such a fuss about an individual who did not even hold any important post?" Surely many Soviet officials do nothing but echo his complacent words: *"Le passé de la Russie était magnifique, son présent est magnifique, et son futur sera encore plus magnifique."*

TERTZ SATIRISED the continuity of the police mentality down the ages in his portrait of a Soviet police official, the worthy Colonel Tarasov, in "The Icicle":

> The dialectic was not Colonel Tarasov's strong point, but he had a great and insatiable soul. Perhaps the soul of Tamerlane, Peter the Great, or Friedrich Nietzsche—I turned over the various possibilities in my mind....
>
> But on closer inspection, things turned out to be rather different. When I looked a little more carefully into the recesses of his large, heavy-weight body, I saw drawn up behind him policemen of various ranks, guards, and overseers.
>
> They went back to the most ancient civilisations and they emerged from the darkness in such strict order that at first I thought they all had the same face, but then I saw what it was: each was of a higher rank than his predecessor, as though they had been born specially for the purpose of rising by one degree during their lives. The last had been a lieutenant-colonel in the reign of Alexander the Second. This was the closest in rank to Colonel Tarasov, who thus stood at the apex of the whole evolution.

We can only hope that Tertz' "Colonel Tarasov" will be mindful of the fact that his Tsarist predecessors allowed Russian writers to publish abroad with impunity. If and when the successors of Benckendorff, Arakcheev, and Zhdanov commence proceedings against Andrei Sinyavsky and his friend, this would not be the first time that the Soviet authorities have put themselves in the dock before the outside world. When "the trial begins" it is also their own.

Leopold Labedz & Max Hayward

[2] See ENCOUNTER, June 1965, "The Case of Mihajlo Mihajlov," by Anatole Shub.

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LETTERS

Churchill's "Iron Curtain"

WHAT Bryan Magee's informative article [ENCOUNTER, October] about young Winston Churchill's novel *Savrola* seems to suggest is that in connection with the sources of Churchilliana, it is not later, but always earlier, than you think. Recently in the Vienna review *Forum* there was a revealing correspondence about the "Iron Curtain" phrase which Churchill, according to some, first coined at Fulton, Missouri, in his speech of March 5th, 1946. The following emerged:

1. Churchill had already used the phrase earlier, but not publicly. On May 12th, 1945, or the week after Nazi Germany's capitulation, he sent a "Top Secret" telegram to President Truman in which he said: "An iron curtain is drawn down over their [the Russian] front. We do not know what is going on behind. There seems little doubt that the whole of the region east of the line Luebeck–Trieste–Corfu will soon be completely in their hands ... and then the curtain will descend...."

2. However, the *corrigenda* to the revised edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* calls attention to the phrase as it was used in the leading article by Dr. Joseph Goebbels in the weekly *Das Reich* for February 25th, 1945. In fact, it was also used before Churchill by Count Schwerin-Koosigk (May 2nd, 1945), the Foreign Minister in the so-called Doenitz Government.

3. In 1921, a writer named Dr. P. Mohr contributed an article entitled "The Puzzle of the Soviet Union" to a publication called *Information about Eastern Questions* in which he observed that: "Bolshevik Russia lay concealed behind an iron curtain...."

4. A year earlier Ethel Snowden published her book entitled *Through Bolshevik Russia* (London, 1920), and in it she recorded on p. 32: "We were behind the 'iron curtain' at last!..."

5. But the phrase had already been used two years earlier by the Russian *émigré* philosopher Vasiliy Rozanov, according to *Everyman's Concise Encyclopedia of Russia*. Rozanov's *Apocalypse of our Time* (1927) was originally published in 1918, and on p. 148 he had written: "With a rumble and a roar, an iron curtain is descending on Russian history...."

6. According to Emile Hinzelin's work on World War I, *Histoire Illustrée de la Guerre du Droit*, the phrase was also employed to describe German-Belgian relations. He noted on p. 407 of vol. II: "When in August 1914 the Queen of Belgium learned of the crimes committed by the German invasion armies against the Belgian civilian population, she (who was born a Bavarian Princess) declared, 'This is the end! Between them and me there is now a bloody iron curtain which has descended forever!'...."

7. As for non-iron curtains, the Abbé de Pradt (a contemporary of Metternich and a confessor of Napoleon) wrote in his *Parallèles de la puissance anglaise et russe relativement à l'Europe*: "Beyond the Vistula a curtain descends which makes it difficult to find out what goes on within the Russian empire...." This was in the year 1823.

Churchill's pen, too, had a sense of history.

Vienna FRIEDRICH HENN

Winston Churchill

YOURS was, I suppose, the first "reconsideration" of Winston Churchill's career ["After the Ball was Over," ENCOUNTER, November], and the general reaction to Goronwy Rees' tasteful and elegant essay in criticism was, so far as I can judge, quite remarkable. It is true that there was a bit of "sensational" reporting in some of the news-agency dispatches (WINSTON ATTACKED). Some of the Continental newspapers brought the news of Churchill's errors and shortcomings with a shade too much relish and the American press reacted with a shade too pious a shock. Still, on the whole, there was a balance and certainly a tolerance which could not quite have been predicted. One person I know did say that she would never read ENCOUNTER again and intended to cancel her subscription. But the Tory columnist in the *Daily Telegraph* was much more realistic and intelligent when he wrote (October 21) that Rees' ENCOUNTER article "is noteworthy as one of the earliest swallows in what will undoubtedly be a long season of reappraisal.... If all that is to come treats the subject as perceptively as Mr. Rees, we shall be spared a lot of bitter controversy...."

Bitterness almost broke out in one television programme I saw, in which for a moment it seemed that the participants—Anthony Howard (of the *Sunday Times*), Miss Dee Wells (of the *Sun*), and Peregrine Worsthorne (of the *Sunday Telegraph*)—were on the verge of coming to blows. Mr. Worsthorne was outraged that Goronwy Rees' article should have been taken as a denigration, a denial of Churchill's "greatness"—"the whole point of the article was in saying that he was wrong on virtually everything except on the one thing that it was important for him to be right about...." The others apparently remained unconvinced. "What is greatness?" Worsthorne asked, and only he (on this programme) had time to answer: "It isn't to be right on every single issue, it is to be right on the essential issue where in fact the essential issue is all that matters...."

As in Churchill's own favourite image about the pessimist and the optimist, one sees the bottle half-empty, the other half-full. The truth of final historical evaluation will always, I am afraid, remain subject to the limiting factor of temperament. Perspective is all.

ANTHONY GRIGG

Oxford

The Teach-In

PROFESSOR Max Beloff alleges [ENCOUNTER, October] that my speech contained no more than a partisan account of the Teach-in sessions that had been held

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in the United States. He did not, unfortunately, listen to my remarks attentively. Had he done so, he *would not* have heard me refer to "my President and your Prime Minister" (as he puts it). I happen to be a British subject and I cannot remember ever mistaking my nationality or my use of personal pronouns.

Second, my speech did not offend the large number of Americans in the audience who later came to talk with me. It is true that I attempted a light-hearted opening speech. The audience responded favourably to what Mr. Beloff amiably calls my raising of cheap laughs, probably because it recognised that a relaxed atmosphere was necessary if an unpretentious discussion of complex diplomatic issues was to take place. As I sat down, Mr. Beloff rose to hector the audience and myself with unwanted and ponderous rebukes; he thus provoked a disorder in the House that continued for several minutes.

Isaac Deutscher made exactly the same point as Mr. Beloff in opening the Teach-in that was held in Washington last May: that no comparable Teach-in had been held in Moscow or Hanoi. When he did so, his reference was sincerely couched with regret; it was not aimed at inflaming an academic audience into the groans and abuse that Mr. Beloff intentionally generated. If Mr. Beloff felt a personal need to derogate the Teach-in which he was chairing by attacking me, I wish that he had at least paid me the courtesy of listening to what I had said.

WALTER GOLDSTEIN

Brooklyn College,
City University of New York

IT appears that I was in error and that Professor Goldstein is a British subject; I regret both the error and the fact. His references to President Johnson and the Prime Minister were in my view offensive and unworthy of what was intended to be an academic occasion. If Professor Goldstein devotes himself to political agitation against two governments—he must expect double trouble. My public rebuke was justified and I stand by it.

MAX BELOFF

All Souls College,
Oxford

Peter Weiss' Auschwitz

By Joel Carmichael

HAVING seen the West Berlin *première* of Peter Weiss' new play, *Die Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*), I found his short article on Auschwitz ("My Place") in last month's ENCOUNTER more than a little irritating.

The bestiality, the dementia, and above all the scope of the Auschwitz phenomenon simultaneously smother and dwarf personal reaction. Weiss, paying a brief visit to the actual site of the horrors twenty years later, was clearly hard put to it to find some way of expressing a shock that, while genuine, I had the impression he was making a rather conscientious point of feeling. He was, after all, making his own reaction, indeed his mere physical presence, a counter-point to the sufferings of millions. I thought that whatever his real feelings were they failed to pierce the sheath of his narcissism and communicate themselves.

His play makes his article more understandable. For the play can be understood only within a political and personal context that has little to do with the ordeal of those destroyed in the Nazi death-camps.

The Investigation represents the first major attempt to cope with the death-camps as a theatrical subject. It is thus of general European interest, and the attention devoted to it in Germany, before, during, and since the performance, has been extraordinary. It was given seventeen *premières* in one week, as well as many public readings throughout Europe, with at least another twenty performances and readings in prospect. It received, in short, the build-up associated with an occasional super-titanic motion-picture. And all this in both Germanies, making one think of it as a non-partisan, "national" approach to the problem of the German past.

Weiss became well known, of course, through the success of his play about Marat and de Sade, but apparently the point he had been trying to make in the play was too blurred in the West for understanding; it was the "Marxist-Leninists" in Rostock, East Germany, who put on a version that revealed to him what that point was, *i.e.*, the "pre-revolutionary" Marat's superiority to the "individualist" de Sade. The insight of the East German Marxist-Leninists made such an impression on Weiss that, though he will soon be fifty, he decided to train himself in Marxism. He started work on an immense trilogy dealing with the cosmic conflict between the Have and the Have-not nations, cast in the form of the *Divine Comedy*. During the trial of the Auschwitz functionaries in Frankfurt last year he tried to include somehow the trial material in this Dante trilogy. Though he was dissuaded, the structure was kept, which explains the sub-title of *The Investigation*: "An Oratorio in Eleven Cantos." (When I saw the play in Berlin I didn't know this; I thought the sub-title remarkably pompous.)

Thus, by the time Weiss came to construct *The Investigation*, his political views, still amorphous in his Marat-Sade play, had become incisive enough

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Life & Letters Today—(Linguists All)

Moscow

A Soviet *soldier appealed to-day to Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Defence Minister, to stop soldiers from using dirty language, and the Marshal said he would help. The soldier, V. Klustov, wrote a letter to the Marshal which was printed in the* Red Star, *the military newspaper, along with the Marshal's reply.*

"Survivals of the past—ribaldry, rude words, bad language, and dirty expressions," the soldier wrote, should be forbidden in the Army. "I feel ashamed for that soldier or commander who does not respect our mighty, beautiful, and rich Russian language. I am not a cultured milksop who does nothing about this evil." He said he made speeches in Communist youth meetings and got resolutions passed against bad language. "My heart bleeds when I hear all the vulgar and bad language. We should pass a law so all servicemen would address each other politely and not dirty-up our beautiful language. Not only do some soldiers use bad language but they invent words to mean various simple things when there are already words for that." Such "verbal hooliganism," he said, should stop.

Marshal Malinovsky agreed with him, but chided him gently for not having read the code of a soldier, which calls for clear and pure language and is against "verbal hooligans." "This thieves' jargon is a disgusting feature of the character of some people, a sign of their bad education and lack of culture," the Marshal wrote. But he said this sort of language is only used by a few soldiers, not all. "The great majority of our soldiers are highly cultured people with cultured behaviour and cultured speech." He advised the soldier to "create an atmosphere of intolerance and public wrath against hooligan elements." "Call them to order on the spot," the Marshal said. "Make them remove dirty wall paintings."

N.Y. HERALD-TRIBUNE

Washington

The English *language is suffering from a word shortage [Russell Baker writes]. This is because society changes so rapidly nowadays that word-makers cannot produce new words fast enough to keep up with all the new things that are happening. One word we need is, obviously, "miniphoria," a descriptive compound suggesting the odd euphoria that comes over people hunched in miniature machines. Another modern condition for which there is no adequate word is the appearance of women walking down the street in stretch pants. Such a word might be "juglipidity."*

Another modern phenomenon for which there is no word is the crime of robbery by machine. What are the victim's rights after he has futilely punched the coin-return lever a few times? Is it permissible to kick the machine? Should it be turned over to the police? The word we need is "slottery," a noun meaning "robbery by a coin-vending machine."

We need a new word to describe the peculiar quality of courage involved in trying to enter a turnpike during rush-hour traffic, and another to describe the irresistible compulsion to answer a ringing telephone no matter how inconvenient the time or circumstances.

We need a new noun meaning "the act of getting expelled from college to demonstrate one's personal maturity," a new adjective to describe the taste of frozen hamburger patties, and a new verb meaning "to go to foreign movies and pretend to understand the dialogue by criticising the subtitles as inadequate."

In this strange new world where miniphoriacs abound, where juglipidity is rampant in the streets and where the machines are getting away with slottery, one of the worst miseries is that we don't even have the words to explain what's going on.

NEW YORK TIMES

Paris

Of all the *odd words adopted into the French language from Anglo-Saxon origins, the ugliest is "speakerines," the official description of the ladies who make the programme announcements on French television.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Toronto

A new term *has crept into the French language in Canada. It is "Le sit-in." This peaceful type of demonstration was first staged in a Montreal restaurant last night by Quebec separatists. "Le sit-in" will be employed against those restaurants and business establishments which fail to respect the French language in the province.*

The separatists are complaining about restaurants whose waitresses are unable or unwilling to speak French; establishments which have "English only" menus, signs, advertisements and instructions to staff and customers; and French-speaking employees who are forced to speak English to earn a living.

THE TIMES

Ostend

Riot police *tonight used fire hoses to break up fighting between 400 Flemish nationalists and French-speaking Belgian tourists outside Ostend's main church. The Flemish demonstrators, chanting "Out with French-speaking people," paraded to protest the use of French at seaside resorts. The demonstrators chanted their favourite rally song, "The Flemish Lion," and such slogans as "Get out of here, French rats!" The demonstration organisers have demanded that in the northern coastal area, only Flemish should be used in churches, banks, cabarets, casinos, and on the local race-course.*

N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

Nairobi

Western *embassies here have become extremely concerned at the general tone of broadcasts from Radio Stanleyville.*

One embassy spokesman said: "The level of French in these broadcasts has so deteriorated that we are greatly concerned whether the rebel leaders have real control there any more."

THE GUARDIAN

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to enable him to incorporate Auschwitz into his present-day *Weltanschauung*. The result is that the play is a narrowly conceived attack on the West German régime. Have the millions of death-camp victims, who in their own eyes died quite senselessly, have been transformed into pawns in someone else's game?

The treatment the play has received from German critics in both sections of the country illustrates to an unusual degree the split situation there—East and West, past and present. The chief oddity is that so many critics in the West have been willing to accept the atmosphere of non-partisanship claimed for the performances and readings in Western Europe and England. Weiss himself has been perfectly explicit. On the announcement of his conversion to Marxism-Leninism in May 1965 he said: "For those of us who live and work in the West the spreading of the truth is very difficult." First of all the truth must be found, then "we must work as underground fighters (*Partisanen*) in order to spread it..." One wonders whether Weiss was gratified at the ease with which his play was smuggled through to the West, and even more at its having been treated as though it were not a political but a purely artistic-humanitarian work.

YET ONCE I had seen *The Investigation* the most amazing thing about it seemed to me the furore it had created. The work itself is distinguished only by its combination of muddle and flatness. It is at once sensational and tedious; the absence of drama that may be inherent in a documentary exposition is not compensated for either by purging emotion or by new insight.

The actual content of the play consists simply of the evidence given at the Frankfurt trial. It is broken up and condensed into eleven sections—the "cantos"—dealing with the arrival at the camp, the life there, the tortures, the asphyxiations, the burnings, etc. The eighteen defendants are assembled in three rows at one side of the stage; the other side is taken up by the judge, the defending and the prosecuting counsel; the witnesses, all anonymous, are called up to the forefront of the stage to testify in a realistically suggested dock. There was some slight attempt at stylisation reminiscent of Erwin Piscator's earlier Expressionist manner, but the whole Piscator production was essentially naturalistic. The language was of course slightly arranged, elevated and rhythmicised; indeed, Weiss refers to his Dante trilogy as a "great dialectical collage."

In view of Weiss' identification of himself as a Jew (his mother was Swiss, his father a convert to Roman Catholicism) as a framework for his ENCOUNTER article, I thought it strange that throughout the Piscator production the word Jew was not only not mentioned, but there was nothing to indicate that anti-Semitism played any role at all in the genesis of Auschwitz. Though two of the witnesses were doubtless assumed by the Berlin audience to *be* Jews (primarily because of the style of their beards), nothing was said that even raised the question of the identity of the millions of victims with the exception, curiously enough, of the Russian prisoners of war. There were, of course, many such Russians who were killed (some 1½ million); they were referred to in the play often. Towards the end this led to a rather odd blunder. One of the witnesses, summing up the extent of the butchery, lets the Jews slip in again—anonymously!—by mentioning the now well-known figure of 6 million; what, then, happened to the previously mentioned millions of Russians prisoners of war in the final calculation of victims?

In this way everything is effaced and streamlined. By mingling indiscriminately all the disparate elements of the remarkably complex operation of the death-camps, Weiss has made the whole thing both uninteresting and incomprehensible. He has simply omitted the two elements that are, today, surely cardinal in our approach to this outburst of frightfulness—generally, its utter irrationality and, specifically, the true nature of the individual monsters.

Weiss seems to me to be rather confused. The much-discussed point—touched on and made meaningless in his treatment—of whether the guards could have been transferred to less bestial duties, is botched. If they could have been transferred but were not, why not? What, in short, were such people really like? Is he saying that they were simply run-of-the-mill sadists? Evidently not, since he is obviously generalising them to include not merely "ordinary" Nazis but Germans collectively.

The answer lies, of course, both in Weiss' intellectual *Tendenz*, and in his dramatic methods.

Weiss has stated his aim quite explicitly: he is determined to show that it was capitalism, "in its ultimate results," that produced Auschwitz. The present-day implication of this, as he has said, is that in West Germany "the hatred for Bolshevism is the successor to the hatred of the Jews."

This seems to me monstrous. Whatever the outrages perpetrated by "monopoly capitalism," if *that* had been what was behind the Auschwitz phenomenon most of the slaughtered victims would be alive today. (It is true that the by-products of the death-camps put money in the pockets of businessmen, but—let me make the gruesome point—at least the gold, the soap, and the hair were not *wasted*. It is precisely the dementia behind the death-camps that was not business-like. What factory-owner would kill able-bodied slaves?)

As for Weiss' identification of anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism, this is no place to discuss it at length, but it is surely a singularly perverse train of thought. As a revival of the medieval attitude of the satanic role of the Jews in the world, Nazi anti-Semitism was rationally *baseless*. Jews do *not* govern the world secretly on behalf of the Devil. The charges levelled against the Bolshevik dictatorship during the past half-century are, on the other hand, perfectly rational, legitimate, and well-documented, though subject of course to varying explanations. Equating the two attitudes is outrageous even within the realm of partisan politics.

In his play, in any case, Weiss' determination to get this rather strange point across—as a sign of devotion, one cannot help feeling, to his new-found patrons—has bogged down in his material.

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There is simply nothing in the accounts of suffering and torture to support this devious, twisted piece of ideology. The audience is obliged to deduce the point from the peroration made by one of the defendants—one who has been poker-faced, precise, prim, bureaucratic and all-denying—who refers to the millions who've died for their country, and after mentioning the success of Germany in becoming a leading power once again, calls for "a truce." It is really so mild that though Weiss' bias is perfectly unmistakable it is neither dramatic nor persuasive.

Weiss is also unfair in another, more primitive way. In his desire to inculpate the Germans generally (though, really, only the Germans in the West), he is unfair to both Jews and Germans. The judge asks a witness for an explanation of the victims' docility. The witness suggests that no one really knew what was going on since no one survived the death-chambers to spread the news. (This telescopes untruthfully the vast administration needed for the mass butchery and disregards the evidence of resistance.) Then, towards the end, a witness shouts that "millions and millions" of ordinary Germans knew all about the whole thing. Weiss has here confounded, once again, the concentration camps, which were well known, and the death-chambers, which were a fairly well-kept secret (in 1942 even an Axis figure like Horthy did not know of their existence). If *millions* knew all about it, how could it have been kept from all the Jews?

For my own part, I found the play verbose, tedious, singularly ineffective. Some critics have maintained that the audiences they were in were so moved that they could not show it. I can scarcely credit this. The first-night audience in Berlin, in any case, was quite untouched. And what has happened to Piscator's vainglorious boast, of wanting to make the play so "unbearable" that the spectator would leave at once?

It may be, as T. W. Adorno said in 1955, that "after Auschwitz, writing a poem is barbaric." If that is so, how much more so must it be to write a feelingless play *about* Auschwitz!

Sholokhov's Prize

It *was* interesting to have that passage on "Sholokhov's Prize" which you quoted [Encounter, December] from the Paris *Le Monde*. But you might well have been immodest enough to go on to quote an equally relevant passage from "Sholokhov in London" (in Encounter, July 1959, p. 77), which records that:

> ... the first eight chapters of the second volume of *Virgin Soil Upturned* had already appeared in 1955 in several magazines, that there were well-known "difficulties" with the novel's first volume as far back as 1931, that it took intervention on the part of the Central Committee to shake his stuff loose in 1932, that his novels appeared again in 1953 (substantially revised along Stalinist lines), that the 1955–57 editions reveal new additions (the original pages).
>
> Oh, the consternation in Stockholm if Sholokhov is ever considered for a Nobel Prize! Pasternak may be a "traitor," but he never betrayed his poetry; what editions of Sholokhov will the Swedish Academy be offered to read?...

It would be interesting indeed to know which Russian editions the Nobel jurymen did, in fact, read.

Alex Waddell

Brighton

Well-Known

I am the well-known spotter of idiocies in otherwise excellent magazines which ought to know better. You've never heard of me? Then let me present some credentials. Let us examine your really well done issue on "Rediscovering Latin America" for September 1965. The following quotes are from your notes on the authors:

> "Juan Rulfo is one of Mexico's best-known writers" (p. 15). "James Morris, the well-known British author..." (p. 19). "Victor L. Urquidi ... is a well-known Latin American economist" (p. 23). "Arnold Toynbee is the author of the famous..." (p. 30). "Lawrence Alloway, the well-known British art critic..." (p. 71). "Emir Rodriguez Monegal, the well-known Uruguayan literary critic..." (p. 116).

If a writer really is well-known, it is useless to point out the fame of his works; if a writer is well-known only in his country or trade, then calling him so enlightens the general reader not at all. In fact, it rather infuriates certain ones.

Thomas L. Jones

Washington, D.C.

Gumilev in Russia

I should like to congratulate you and Mr. Anatole Shub on the excellent discussion in your June issue of Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer*. It is not only a penetrating and sobering analysis of the plight of Mr. Mihajlov and Yugoslav culture under the Tito dictatorship, but throws considerable light on the contemporary Soviet literary ferment.

I was particularly interested in your quotation from Mr. Mihajlov's article concerning the Soviet poet, Nikolai Gumilev. He is, indeed, a major poetic talent who until very recently was officially an "unperson" in the Soviet Union, and who—like so many other Russian writers of the first three decades of the twentieth century who were stuffed into Stalin's "memory hole"—has been much neglected, both as a personality and as a creative artist, in the West. It may be of interest to you and your readers to know that Professor Gleb Struve and I are at present editing the complete works of Gumilev in the original Russian in four volumes, the second volume of which has just appeared.

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There is, incidentally, scattered evidence of a possible eventual literary rehabilitation of Gumilev in the Soviet Union. Although it is true, as Mr. Mihajlov points out, that he was not mentioned in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (Volume 13, 1952) which appeared during Stalin's lifetime, he is included in the *Small Soviet Encyclopedia* (Volume 3, 1959, p. 229), where he rates 11 lines, in the most recent *Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Volume 1, 1963, p. 300), where he is given 9 lines, and in the recently published second volume of the *Short Literary Encyclopedia* (1964, p. 443), with 46 lines plus bibliographical references. In the latter work Gumilev is criticised for his "pessimistic moods" and "exoticism," but is nevertheless acknowledged as a poetic influence on the "early" works of a number of Soviet poets. In addition, a recent Soviet reference work (1963) provides a page-and-a-half of bibliographical material on Gumilev.

Perhaps the most interesting evidence of the vitality of contemporary Soviet interest in Gumilev, however, is to be found in the volume of literary essays, *Thoughts on Poetry*, by Vladimir Aleksandrovich Lugovskoy—an eminent Soviet poet and critic who died in 1957—published in the Soviet Union in 1960. This volume prints an address delivered by Lugovskoy to a meeting of Moscow poets in 1951, in which he describes a visit to the Moscow Children's Theatre with a group of Soviet youth. After describing his amazement at the literary interest and maturity which they displayed, he went on:

> "These were Moscow children. There were about a hundred of them. And the majority of them just working youth, but they had managed to get hold of a little volume of Gumilev, they were transcribing copies by hand of Gumilev's poems, they were transcribing the poems of Akhmatova, her early lyrics, and so on." (p. 195)

And this still during Stalin's lifetime! But there has still been no official announcement of Soviet plans to republish any of Gumilev's works.

I was also very gratified to hear Mr. Mihajlov's young Soviet university professor describe the publication in the West (I would surmise that he is referring to translations) of proscribed Soviet writers as "an enormous service" in the eyes of the Soviet intelligentsia. I was also just a bit chagrined to see him limit his recognition to the efforts of the Yugoslavs and the Italian communists. The Inter-Language Literary Associates, of which I am Director, has for several years been publishing significant Russian literature—both older works still taboo, and contemporary dissident works smuggled to the West—in the original Russian. This effort was initiated with Professor Struve's and my edition of the complete works of Boris Leonidovich Pasternak (published by the University of Michigan Press in 1961 in four volumes), which is still the definitive edition of this great artist, even in the Soviet Union; and more recently we have issued—in addition to the second volume of Gumilev—editions of Mandelshtam and Zabolotsky. An edition of Anna Akhmatova is in preparation and should appear within the next few months. We have also done, or are doing, various works by Semen Frank, Boris Zaitsev, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Dostoevsky (the chapter from *The Possessed*, "At Tikhon's," which was omitted from the recent "complete" Soviet edition of Dostoevsky), as well as the contemporary works of a number of talented *émigré* writers.

It is most heartening to Professor Struve and myself to have Mr. Mihajlov's confirmation that the publication of such works in the West is considered of such importance by our Soviet readers.

BORIS FILIPOFF
Director
Inter-Language Literary Associate

Plainview, New York

Frazer & Malinowski

IT was with some amazement that I read in the essay by Edmund Leach on Frazer and Malinowski [ENCOUNTER, November] the following remark: "Both men seem to have been more concerned with the plaudits of the gallery than with the pursuit of truth. Both made a cult of the outrageous, Frazer by cynical comments on religion, Malinowski by challenging English sexual morality." Frazer's *The Golden Bough* was certainly addressed to a vast audience but this does not mean that he was playing up to the gallery; his scepticism towards religious beliefs was well attuned to the mental atmosphere of his age. It is difficult to understand how Malinowski by his brilliant analysis of the sexual *mores* of the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands could "challenge English sexual morality." Malinowski was simply following his "pursuit of truth" in a much more imaginative way than many modern sociologists with their load of statistics and charts.

By the way, Malinowski was not "of Polish aristocratic origin": he belonged to the gentry class and he never boasted of any "aristocratic origin."

Z. A. GRABOWSKI

London

THE niceties of Polish class distinctions lie outside my range of exercise. My source described Malinowski's father as "a nobleman of the landed gentry." If, in Dr. Grabowski's classification, such gentlemen were not aristocratic, so be it. As to how Malinowski's brilliant (but certainly misleading) analysis of Trobriand sexual *mores* might be a "challenge to English sexual morality," Dr. Grabowski need only refer to Chapter 3 of Bertrand Russell's *Marriage and Morals* (1929) to see that it was so regarded.

During the first forty years of this century the criteria of scientific validation were a constant source of discussion. Frazer and Malinowski both ignored the implications of these arguments. As Professor Evans-Pritchard has recently observed, the Functionalism of the latter was just as much "demonstration by illustration" as was the Comparative Method of the former. In neither case is there any real attempt to test hypotheses. My pur-

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pose is not to condemn these men for responding to the "plaudits of the gallery" but merely to point to the source of their celebrity. In their most famous works they were not addressing themselves to the same audience as Dr. Grabowski's "modern sociologists with their statistics and charts." "The mental atmosphere of an age" running from 1885 to 1942 is hardly a meaningful concept. Some found Frazer's religious attitude congenial, others did not. What is plain is that the complex piecemeal manner in which the 3rd edition of *The Golden Bough* was published was expressly designed to make the scandalous portions separately available to the general public.

EDMUND R. LEACH

King's College,
Cambridge

Simone de Beauvoir

M. FRANÇOIS BONDY [ENCOUNTER, October] should practise what he preaches and check details. Not only has he twice quoted Mme de Beauvoir—"At thirty-five I hoped that one day my life would be read with deeply-felt curiosity..." instead of, "At fifteen..." and "I hate *clabaudage*" as the translation of "*je n'ai pas le goût des potinages*"—he has also confused Jacques Lanzmann with his brother Claude; it was with the latter that Mme de Beauvoir had a love affair.

Not content with these inaccuracies, he has, on the strength of a mistranslation, thought it fitting to add his voice to the ludicrous chorus of insinuations that Simone de Beauvoir's femininity is a debatable point. Mme de Beauvoir writes: "*...cet ensemble unique, mon expérience à moi... nulle part cela ne ressuscitera... si elle avait engendrée ...quoi?*" M. Bondy translates this last: "if *I* had only begotten...." He then helpfully points out for the benefit of the less literate that "*engendrer*" is a masculine verb. In fact, this verb is linked with "*mon experience,*" to which "*elle*" refers, and as, except in French grammar, experience is a word completely without sex it matters not one whit whether the verb is "*engendrer*" or "*mettre au monde*" and his implied argument is completely invalid.

CATRIONA HINDLE

Leeds

MISS HINDLE is quite right: instead of "thirty-five" it should read "fifteen" and instead of Jacques, Claude. I apologise for these needless slips and am grateful for the correction.

I do not feel that the sentence: "*Il ne s'agit pas ici de clabauder sur moi-même et sur mes amis; je n'ai pas le goût des potinages*" is wrongly condensed by: "I hate *clabaudage*." But even if "*potinages*," I still question her dislike of it. Madame de Beauvoir in a moving passage for which I had expressed admiration regrets that her "*expérience*" has not fathered or begot (*engendrer*) a hill or a rocket instead of these books which have meant so much to many readers, and it remains an odd sentence, including the use of the masculine word; I think it was permissible to point this out. I am afraid I do not know how to define "femininity" at all, and certainly have not questioned Madame de Beauvoir's femininity, only her humanity.

FRANÇOIS BONDY

Paris

Pornography and Privacy

GEORGE STEINER'S doubts about sexual realism ["Night Words," ENCOUNTER, October] are but a part of a long-due, but now widespréad reappraisal of the desirability of artistic and other forms of erotica. Malcolm Muggeridge and a recent writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* are other doubters though the form of their misapprehensions has differed somewhat from Mr. Steiner's.

It should however be realised that the only real difference between Mr. Steiner and the so-called "Mrs. Grundies" of our society who want to "clean up our society" is that the latter have not the same clarity of thought and expression that your contributor employs. Their attitude is an instinctive one, whereas Mr. Steiner has analysed the problem and identified it as an attack on privacy.

Mr. Steiner says that sex is a private matter and therefore should not be "marketed wholesale" whereas Christian moralists have said for a long time that sex is sacred and therefore a subject that we should talk about with reticence and restraint. The real difference in the two points of view is not great. Why should sexual relations be "one of the citadels of privacy"? Mr. Steiner suggests that the reason is that we must be able to gather the scattered elements of our consciousness "to some kind of inviolate order and repose," and thus discover "the unique bent" of our identity. His complaint is that the new pornographers subvert this freedom and bring us into servitude (presumably to their conception of sexual matters). But surely is this not what moralists in the past have meant by the word "corruption?" "The tendency to corrupt" has often been laughed at as a ridiculous concept, but it seems that Mr. Steiner has identified it with remarkable lucidity.

This sort of literature "corrupts" because it "pre-packages" the images of our imagination and necessarily comes to control our thought forms in sexual matters. Christian moralists have often distinguished freedom from licence by saying that Christian freedom is a freedom to do the right or the good rather than licence to do anything. Their objection to what the preface to the *Olympia Reader* describes as "freedom" is that it corrupts and destroys true freedom just as does the "sub-eroticism and sexual suggestion of modern advertisement" to which Mr. Steiner alludes. After all, freedom and privacy are not in reality so very different.

Perhaps the "Mrs. Grundies" who protest at any form of sexual realism appear very conservative and puritanical, and doubtless some of them are, but at heart the majority of them have been making

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the same protest as Mr. Steiner and it is to be hoped that the point they make will be respected.

TIMOTHY C. F. STUNT

London

GEORGE STEINER's recent essay confused two things that really we ought to be able to tell apart. Unwanted publicity which erodes individuality and personal intimacy is one thing; impersonal and uninventive accounts of sexual practices are something else again. The underlying objection to the latter is that they tend to sever the bodies portrayed from the feelings of intimacy and affection that real live people elicit, *i.e.*, they tend towards cruelty. Such, indeed, is their appeal, since the reader may secretly use these strangers and caricatures to evoke and disguise thoughts about real live people.

Professor Steiner touches this distinction at the conclusion of his essay, then reverts at once to his polemic against invasions of privacy. There is no necessary connection between pornography and invasions of privacy. Not unless you assume that pornography is straight reportage, or that the objects of cruel fantasies are actually injured, or that sexual topics ought not to be talked about at all.

ALAN REED

West Lafayette, Indiana

GEORGE STEINER's "Night Words" struck me as an unusually perceptive and, therefore, liberating combination of human and political sensibility.

On first reading there was only one aspect of his otherwise completely convincing thesis and plea that worried me: would or could a philistine not say exactly what he said? On second thoughts, however, it became clear to me that the philistine could not, because he is the customer of a form of pornographic literature which Steiner unfortunately did not mention but which has for its purpose, or result, precisely the same destruction of individuality in sex which is Steiner's subject: the "sex manuals."

STEVEN S. SCHWARZSCHILD

Department of Philosophy,
Washington University, Saint Louis

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Robert McKenzie's article is based on a paper presented to the American Political Science Association meeting in Washington, D.C., in September 1965. Thanks are due to the National Opinion Polls (and the *Daily Mail*) as well as the Gallup organisation for permission to quote freely from their bulletins and other publications....

A. L. Rowse's autobiographical volume *A Cornishman at Oxford* (Cape) appeared in 1965, shortly after his controversial interpretation of Shakespeare. Among his other books are *The Early Churchills* (1956), *The Later Churchills* (1958), and *All Souls and Appeasement* (1961), all published by Macmillan....

Max Hayward is at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and translated (with Manya Harari) Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. He and **Leo Labedz** (who is an editor of *Survey* Magazine in London) edited *Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia 1917–62* (Oxford University Press, 1963)....

T. W. Adorno is a German philosopher, sociologist, and music critic. He left Germany in 1932 and resided in the U.S. during the Hitler years. He was closely associated with Thomas Mann and played a role in the conception of Mann's novel, *Doktor Faustus*. He now lectures at the University of Frankfurt, and has recently published several volumes of philosophical and literary criticism as well as a study of contemporary music and a book on Wagner....

David Riesman, who is a professor at Harvard University, is the author of *The Lonely Crowd*....

V. S. Naipaul's books include *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) and *An Area of Darkness* (1964)....

Edward Lucie-Smith is a young author (born in Jamaica, 1933), poet and critic, who writes regularly for *The Times*....

Michael Howard is Professor of War Studies at the University of London and the author of *The Franco-Prussian War* (Hart-Davis, 1961)....

Herbert Luethy has just had a volume of his historical essays, *Le Passé Présent,* published in the "Collection *Preuves*." The first part of his article was published last month....

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The second issue of this new quarterly journal is devoted to papers read at the Round Table Conference of the International Association of Political Science on the subject of *Opposition and Control*. The conference, held in Grenoble in September 1965, was presided over by Professor Jacques Freymond of Geneva, and was attended by participants from fifteen countries.

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